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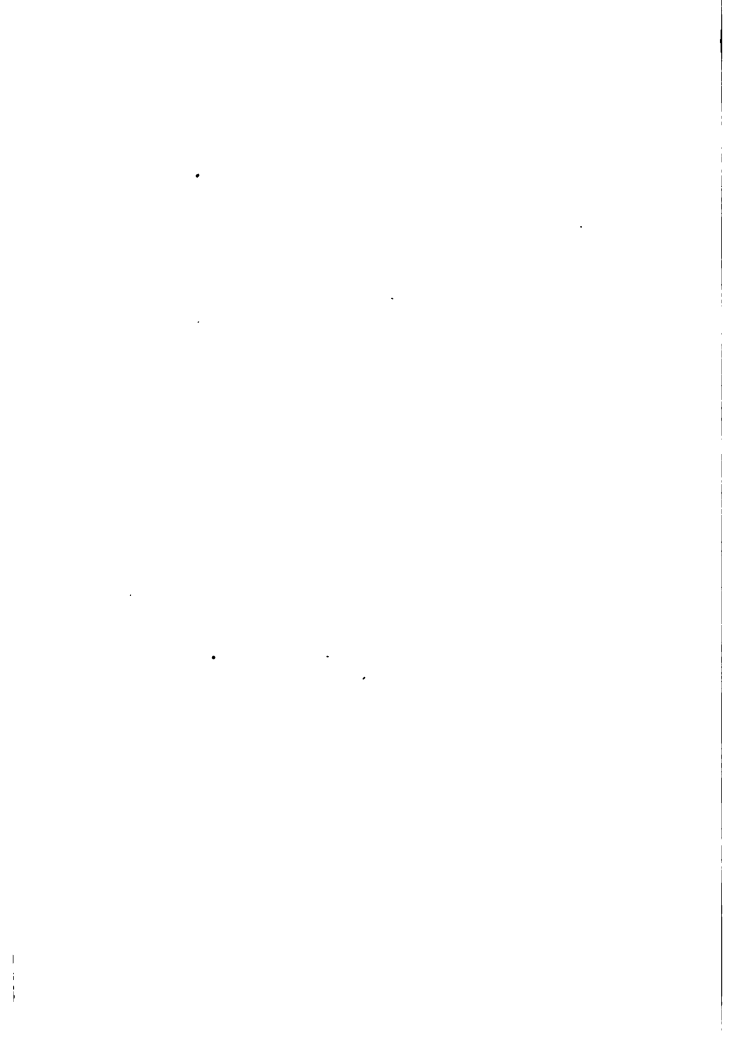
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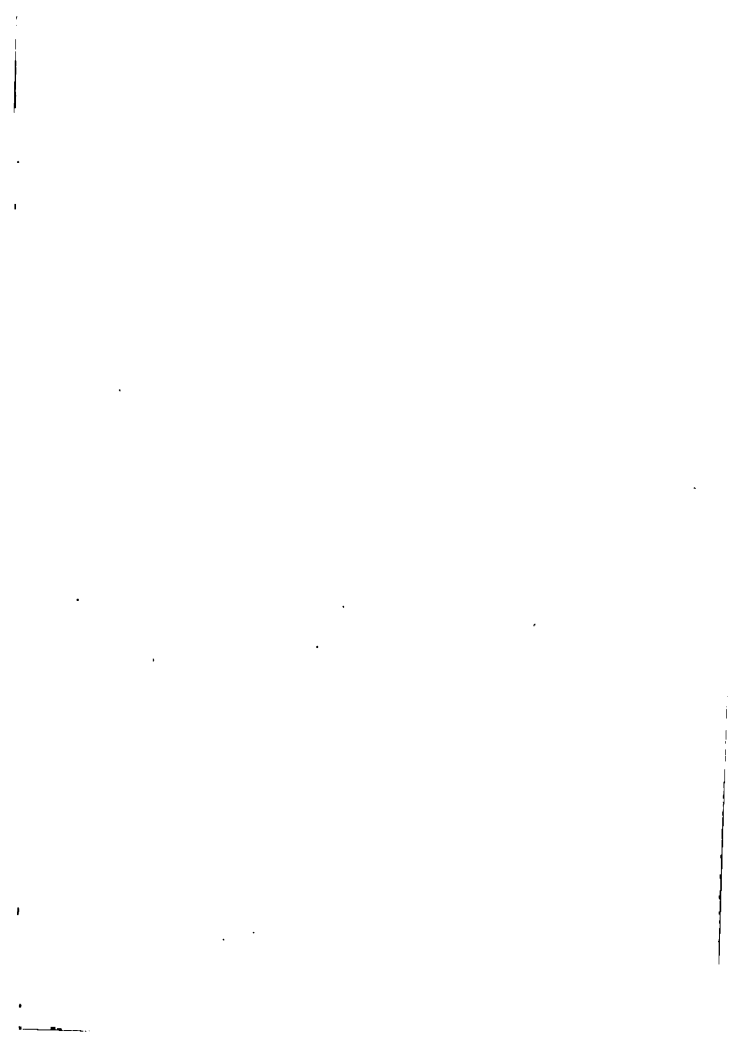
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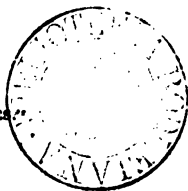
FLOWERS
AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS.

BY

ANNE PRATT,

AUTHOR OF "THE FIELD, THE GARDEN, AND THE
WOODLAND."

—
" CONSIDER THE LILIES"
—



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P R E F A C E.

The following pages are intended chiefly for the information and amusement of those who, while fond of flowers, have not made them the object of their study. Several interesting circumstances respecting flowers are here recorded; and the general observations on their habits and nature, which an acquaintance with botany has enabled the author to furnish, are expressed in a manner which, from its general avoidance of scientific terms, she hopes will render her work pleasing to the general reader.

She has taken indiscriminately, as the subject of her observations, the flower which, blooming on the parterre of a British garden, has been

brought thither from a distant country; or the little wild blossom which lends a charm to our native meadows, or is reflected by the limpid waters of our streams, or hides in the green recesses of the shady woods.

To those readers who have just commenced the study of botany, or who may intend to pursue it at some future time, the author hopes these pages may not be unacceptable. Those who have not spent much time in the country, experience considerable difficulty in the commencement of botanical studies, from an ignorance of the familiar names of flowers. In an elementary work, many facts of the science must be explained by a reference to common flowers; and a considerable number of the names of plants must be acquired before the study can be rendered pleasant and easy. As has been remarked by Mr. Loudon, "a
who knows only ten plants, will require

a greater effort of memory to recollect two more, than one who knows a thousand will to remember an additional two hundred."

It is hoped that the associations connected with many flowers, which are in this volume presented to the readers, will enable them to remember the names of several plants, and serve to interest them in the study of nature.



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INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THERE certainly never was a time when the love and study of flowers was more general than at present. Not only is the number of botanists annually increasing, but flower-shows and horticultural societies are frequently inviting public attention to the beautiful ornaments of the garden or conservatory. Many who will not study plants scientifically, or who care little to rear them, are disposed to listen to any general information to be obtained respecting them. To those who value the study of nature, it is matter of congratulation that wild-flowers are now regarded with so much interest, that they who wander abroad in the meadows wish to know their names and properties, and to learn the

old legends connected with many of them, and which have brought down to us so much of the feelings and habits of other days.

There is something in the love of any portion of nature, which is calculated to produce kindly emotions in the bosom where it resides. It is, indeed, a gift of blessings to him who owns it. "It serves," says Alison, "to identify us with the happiness of that nature to which we belong, to give us an interest in every species of being which surrounds us, and, amid the hours of curiosity and delight, to awaken those latent sympathies from which all the moral and intellectual greatness of man finally arises." And well may we, therefore, when we see the child treasuring his daisies and cowslips, or chasing the brown bee on the moor; or behold the artisan tending his auriculas, or the lady teaching the jessamine's sweet wreath to robe her bower in silver;—well may we welcome the sight. It is an indication of a perception of beauty—of an awakened love of nature, which will not be satisfied with the object before it,

but will comprise, in its regard, the wonders and beauties of earth, and bear with it an intellectual joy and improvement.

There is a charm in the thought, that the pleasure derived from wild-flowers lies open to the youngest and the poorest of mankind. It has been said of birds, that they are the poor man's music; and we may observe of flowers, that they are the poor man's poetry. For him, as for all, they are scattered unsparingly over the lap of earth; smiling in clusters among the leafy wood, fringing the field-path, glowing in the sunny regions of the world, or raising their pale heads above the dreariest snows. In viewing the beautiful colours, and inhaling the rich odours of plants; in examining their structure, and marking how well it is adapted to the situation for which it is intended, the mind is led to a cheerful gratitude to Him who has painted the meadow with delight—

“ And thus, with many feelings, many thoughts,
We make a meditative joy, and find
Religious meanings in the forms of Nature.”

The lover of either the garden or the country landscape, cannot have failed to remark the effect of the seasons upon the gradual development of its leaves and blossoms. Each month has its peculiar floral ornaments; and although the warmth or the coldness of the atmosphere has an influence in accelerating or retarding, by a short period, the unfolding of flowers, yet each month is so far constant in its processes that we look with confidence for the plants which generally grace it. January has its snow-drops, and June its roses. In the coldest weather the *laurustinus* and Christmas-rose are blooming in our gardens, and the furze gives its lustre to the lone moorland. Then that "bonnie gem" the spring-daisy—the morning-star of the flowers—appears here and there, and the groundsel puts forth its yellow blossoms. The garden beds present the fair snowdrop, and the rich golden luxuriance of the crocus. The boughs of the mezereon are clothed with lilac clusters; the hepaticas venture to unfold their small rose-coloured or blue flowers; the daffo-

dils hang down their yellow cups; and the brilliant vases of the anemonies are open to the vernal showers; and then follow the many lovely blossoms of spring and summer.

The trees, as they resume their foliage in the early part of the year, exhibit, each month, a greater richness and variety of colour. The young buds of the honeysuckle often unfold in January; the gooseberry and lilac about February; and the hawthorn is getting gradually covered during April, and preparing for its show of May flowers, while the lime is as yet scarcely producing a leaf. Then, when the lilac-tree is full, not only of its foliage, but covered with its flowery clusters, and the birch leaves quiver to the winds, the elm and ash open their young buds, and a small leaf or two appears here and there on their branches. The garden acacia remains many days longer before it shews one token of spring, and the summer foliage has lent a rich glory to wood and garden before one full green leaf decks the stately walnut tree.

It was the opinion of Linnæus that the agriculturist might be guided in sowing his grain by the leafing of trees, and several naturalists have agreed with him. The old proverb, often acted upon by farmers, is founded on a similar principle.

“ When the sloe-tree is white as a sheet,
Sow your barley whether it is dry or wet.”

Mr. Templeton, in his Naturalist's Report, thus remarks upon this subject: “As plants vegetate according to the temperature which prevails, and flowers blow in a regular and never-varying order, we have certain means which can never fail, for directing us when to begin and leave off the various operations of husbandry and gardening. Should we therefore find, after a few years experience, that the best crops were uniformly produced when we sowed or planted at the time a particular tree or plant flowered, we have ever a sure guide, independent of astronomical revolutions, and can direct others to pursue the same plan in whatever country they are placed. Thus, if we have found that

on sowing peas, or other seed, when the gooseberry flowered, they are ready for gathering when the corn-marigold flowered, we are pretty sure that each succeeding year the same uniformity will prevail." It is well known that our ancestors named some months according to their natural appearances: thus February was termed Sprout-kale, and March, Stormy-month; and Mr. Loudon tells us that the Indians of America plant their corn when the wild-plum blooms, or when the leaves of the oak are about the size of the squirrel's ears. The names of some of their months are also given according to their observations of vegetable changes. Thus, one is called by the poetical name of the budding-month, and one rather later is termed the flowering-month; while the autumn is mournfully characterized by a word which signifies the fall of the leaf.

"As the spring among the seasons, are the young among the people," was the remark of a writer of antiquity; and its truth has been recognised in all succeeding ages. It has been

well said, that the loveliest of earth's many contrasts is that of green and white; and so fresh and tender is the green which the leaves on the spray and the young grass present to us at this season, and so clear and frequent is the white tint of early flowers, that this contrast may be seen in our every spring walk. In a few months later, both the foliage and the grass have a far deeper and fuller hue, but now they give to earth a character of freshness, and seem to remind us of what the world must have been when first created.

The flowers of summer, like those of sunny climates, are mostly remarkable for their bright colours and a great degree of fragrance. This odour is emitted by means of the sun's influence, and most flowers are either scentless, or yield diminished perfumes during darkness. The night-scented flowers are exceptions to this rule, but they are few in this country, and rare in any, except in those lands which are situated in the hottest regions of the globe. Light is of great importance to plants, enabling them to

derive nutriment from the matter which they extract from the soil. Plants exposed to a great degree of solar influence are not only harder and more vigorous, but also fuller of colour, than those of shady places; and odoriferous flowers are found in most abundance and greatest perfection, in countries on which the sun shines with fullest power.

“Chill is thy breath, pale autumn,” sings the poet, though, had not poets called this season pale, we might have termed it the rosy, or the golden autumn. In the rich month of September the fruits of the earth are most abundant, and these are chiefly of a deep red, and always of some full colour, as purple or brown. The berries which hang about the autumn trees may vie with the blackness of the jet, or the redness of the coral or ruby. There are the berries of the bryony and the honeysuckle, of a deep and soft red; and the more brilliant scarlet clusters of the common nightshade; and the glossy red bunches of the dogwood; and the mountain-ash, and the wayfaring-tree; and all the nume-

rous hips and haws, upon which revel the merry songsters, and the meek woodmouse, and the many little creatures for whom a feast has been spread with a liberal hand. A deep yellow tint is also the predominating colour among autumn flowers, almost all our native blossoms at this season having either some tinge of redness, or wearing that deep yellow in which, as the Chinese say, the sun loves to array himself: while the deep and varied colour of the wild wood and the shrubbery delight the artist and the lover of nature, who pause in their walks to mark, in the foliage, the rich green tint, the bright yellow, the brown, or the crimson.

Our native plants often display a considerable degree of this latter hue upon their stems and leaves at the decline of the year. Some few, like the red-cornel, have their foliage altogether red; others have here and there,

“ The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can;
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
From the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.”

The prevalence of crimson foliage is, however, often an indication that the plant to which it belongs is of American origin. Never does the Virginian-creeper present half so lovely an appearance as when, clothed in its autumn suit, it might rival, in depth and richness of colour, some of the glowing tints of an autumnal sunset.

As in the spring the trees gradually assume their sunny livery, so in the autumn they gradually lose it. The walnut tree soon drops its foliage, and the park is early strewed with the large leaves of the horse-chestnut. By the end of September the town walk has lost its shade of limes, and nothing but a few brown leaves remain to tell of the lately shaded grove; but it is not till November has passed, amid stormy gusts and drenching rains, that the apple-tree of the orchard and the oak of the forest hang out their naked branches to the winter winds; while the privet and ivy, the holly and the butcher's-broom of the hedges, and the evergreens of the garden, still remain to cheer us, and the brown leaves of the young beech tree wait for the

spring breezes to scatter them from the spray—

“ Pale rugged winter, bending o'er his tread,
His grizzled hair bedropt with icy-dew.”

is Chatterton's description of the concluding season. Vegetation is now almost covered with snow, and were it not so, plants would perish from the countries at the north of our globe, and from elevated districts. So effectual is the preserving power of the snowy covering to the young vegetable beneath it, that plants, when removed to gardens whose aspect is much warmer than that of their native regions, are often killed by the frost, which, in their late situations, could not reach them for the snow. The progress of vegetable growth, upon the removal of the snow is, in cold countries, so quick, that in Sweden the earth, which was one white sheet for months during winter, is, in the course of a fortnight, gay with leaves and flowers. Mr. Laing says of its rapidity in this country, that it gives you the impression of a self-acting power, rather than a process

following warmth and moisture. "The colts-foot and the strawberry plant seem," says this gentleman, "to have thawed a little circle of snow around themselves, and to be in full vegetable life before there is any perceptible change in the temperature of the air. The grass springs up so suddenly, that its growth must have been in progress under the cover of the snow. In the last week of May the snow was gone, the country was green, the cuckoo was in the woods, the swallow about the houses, and the salmon springing in the fiords. Summer was come." Snow is, both by its soft texture and want of colour, useful to the plants and seeds lying beneath it, being thus a bad conductor of heat. Plants under its protecting shelter never experience a greater degree of cold than 32° of Fahrenheit.

Winter is the season allotted to that repose from growth, which is necessary to the vegetable constitution; but the repose is not of that absolute nature which it is sometimes thought to be. The sap does not, as was formerly sup-

posed, cease to flow; but the fluids of plants, although in a languid state, continue to make some movement. It is owing to the comparatively torpid state of plants at this season, that transplantation, if attempted, generally proves fatal.

The mosses so numerous and beautiful during winter, upon the old roots and stems of trees, are also provisions against the excess of cold; and while they serve as a clothing to the trees, they add greatly by their verdure, and minute beauty, to the scene, in which bright tints have become unfrequent; their most common places of growth are cold situations and barren soils.

In the summer this verdant covering preserves the trees from the heat of the sun, and by its power of readily imbibing, and long retaining, in its small cells, the moisture of the atmosphere, it secures the larger plant from the drought to which it might else be subjected.

Those countries only which are situated within the Polar regions, and constantly covered with snow, are entirely destitute of plants, if we ex-

cept the summits of those lofty mountains of other countries whence the ice never dissolves. The plants peculiar to very cold and elevated districts, are chiefly diminutive in size, and bear blossoms which are large in proportion to the leaves. In such situations, mosses and lichens are numerous; and plants, having compound flowers, like the daisy, or cross-shaped blossoms, like the wallflower, are common, while some of the umbelliferous tribes, like the carrot and parsley, are found there.

In the Torrid Zone vegetation assumes its most majestic form, and a tree, like the baobab and the banian, is large enough to cover a regiment of soldiers. The flowers of tropical countries possess the richest lustre and strongest odour; yet the plants of the different hemispheres vary greatly. Thus, throughout America there are no heaths, and in South America no rose-trees; while, in Africa, vast tracts of land are gay with varieties of beautiful heaths, and Asia is the garden of roses. The plants of Africa are remarkable for their numerous thorns, the

bluish green colour of their foliage, and for the succulent nature of the leaves of those flowers, which, like the fig marigold, bloom in the desert. The leaves of American plants are frequently long and smooth, and in North America the prevailing colour of the blossoms is white, nine out of ten being said to be of this hue. The trees of New Holland have a dull and uninteresting appearance, owing to the existence of glands upon both surfaces of the leaves; and there is no other part of the world in which vegetation has altogether so singular a character as in this. The leaves of many Australian trees seem twisted out of their usual position, and the leaf-stalk is often flat and expanded, performing all the usual functions of a leaf to its parent plant. An island climate is generally considered very favourable to the development of a variety of vegetation, and many islands have each its own peculiar flora.

CHAPTER II.

PRIMROSE — ANTICIPATIONS OF SPRING — REGIONS IN WHICH THE PRIMROSE IS FOUND—DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRIMROSE—AURICULA—COWSLIP—SOME ACCOUNT OF ORDER PRIMULACEÆ—VERSES ON THE MOUNTAIN PRIMROSE.

“ Welcome, pale primrose ! starting up between
Dead matted leaves of ash, and oak, that strew
The every lawn, the wood and spinney through,
'Mid creeping moss, and ivy's darker green :
How much thy presence beautifies the ground ;
How sweet thy modest unaffected pride
Glows on the sunny banks, and wood's warm side,
And where thy fairy flowers in groups are found.”

Clare.

SOMETIMES on a morning in March, when the sun and rain may alternately remind us of spring and winter, the inhabitant of a town is surprised to see from his window the countryman carrying into the city the nosegay of primroses, mingled

perhaps with a few early violets. The snow was so lately on the ground, and the wind whistles yet so shrilly around his dwelling, that spring and its flowers seem hardly to be thought of, till its herald in the cheerful nosegay bids him leave the fireside, and tells him with voiceless eloquence that it may be worth his while to visit the woods, for that primrose banks are already beginning to unfold their sulphur-coloured beauties, and to breathe on the air their delicate odours.

The common primrose (*Prímula vúlgaris*) is the early blooming flower, and where is the meadow, or the green lane of England, which it haunts not? Its name, derived from the word *primus* (the first), happily expresses one of its charms. If we value the autumn flowers because they are the last, because they are soon to leave us, still more do we delight to welcome the blossoms of spring. Long summer days are approaching, we may anticipate pleasant walks in

“ Each lane and alley green,
Dingle or bushy dell of the wild wood,”

and hope soon to revel in the profusion of trees and flowers.

There are five species of primrose indigenous to Great Britain, and the simple beauty of the whole family has led to the cultivation in the garden of several others. The double lilac primrose especially, is very generally the companion of the crocus on the garden-bed. No primrose banks grace the warm countries lying between the Tropics; but on the top of elevated mountains, or in spots where the temperature of the air is reduced by the sea-breeze, a few stray primroses appear. The vivid flowers that delight in sunshine are seldom contrasted by so pale a hue as that worn by these little blossoms,—for white flowers are found most in northern lands, or in the early season of temperate climes. In moderately tempered regions, however, our little primrose is common, delighting peculiarly in the moist clayey soil of the meadow or wood. The root of this flower, as well as that of the cowslip, has a strong scent of anise; and persons who like this odour, often gather the root

in March and dry it. It is said to impart the flavour to wine.

On one of those rocky mountains of America, above whose summits the clouds roll in solemn darkness, or by their dense whiteness seem to mingle with the wide canopy of snow, the botanist Douglas found a primrose, almost concealed by the fleecy mantle;—a species which has been named in honour of the discoverer, the Douglas Primrose.

“ Tree nor shrub,
Dare that drear atmosphere; no Polar pine
Upreads a veteran front; yet there ye stand,
Leaning your cheeks against the thick-ribbed ice,
And looking up with brilliant eyes to Him,
Who bids you bloom, unblanched, amid the waste
Of desolation.”

All the wild primroses of our island are not pale coloured. There is the bird's-eye primrose (*Prímula farinósa*), with its musk scented foliage and lilac blossom, often found in Yorkshire, and in other places in the north of England; and there is the Scottish species (*Prímula*

Scótica), which is almost as deeply coloured a purple as the garden auricula.

Besides the flowers which are universally called primrose, botanists include under this name the polyanthus and auricula, the oxlip and the cowslip. The polyanthus is merely a variety of the field primrose, produced by the skill of the gardener; and the oxlip, which is generally like a large cowslip, is thought also to be but a variety of the sulphur-coloured primrose.

The auricula (*Prímula aurícula*) is very frequent in cottage gardens, and assumes various colours under culture. The artisans who are so happy as to have a small piece of ground in the neighbourhoods of some of our manufacturing towns, have taken this flower under their especial care. They have bestowed considerable pains and expense on its improvement, and seem to have almost as great a passion for it as the Dutch entertain for the tulip. It grows wild on the mountainous parts of Switzerland, Italy, and Germany, and is, in its native state,

either yellow or white; the skill of the florist having brought it to its present colour of brown or purple, sometimes varied with a green or white edge; it was formerly known by the name of mountain cowslip, or bear's ears.

“Pale cowslip fit for maiden's early bier.”

Cowslip and Drelip are the old names of this flower, yet it is often called Paigle in the midland counties of England, and in Scotland, where it is rare. Ben Jonson, associating it in his verse with our other spring favourite, speaks of “Bright day's eyes, and the lips of cows;” and it probably received its name from its soft velvety texture resembling that of a lip. The country people, in some parts of Kent, call it fairy-cup.

In the midland and southern counties of England, a sweet and pleasant wine, in flavour resembling the Muscadel, is made from the cowslip flower, and it is one of the most wholesome and pleasant of home-made wines, and slightly narcotic in its effects. In times when

English wines were more used, every housewife in Warwickshire could produce her clear cowslip wine, and many a maiden could say of this, as did Christabel of her wild-flower drink,

“ It is a wine of virtuous powers,
My mother made it of wild flowers.”

The cowslip is still sold in many markets for this purpose, and little cottage girls still ramble the meadows during April and May in search of it. Silkworms may be fed upon the foliage, and are said to thrive as well as on the leaves of the mulberry: country people use it as a salad, or boil it for the table.

The primrose is the type of the natural order called by botanists Primulaceæ, which consists of a number of lowly but very beautiful plants, the flowers of which are chiefly pale coloured, though occasionally of a deep hue. In some of the orders, in which plants are classed upon the natural system, their general appearance is so similar, as that if one plant is known, the rest are recognised immediately, as belonging to the

same order. Thus the leguminous tribe may be known by their pea-shaped blossoms, and their seed-vessels formed of a pod; and the labiate tribe always bear flowers shaped like those of the thyme and rosemary; but the primrose order does not exhibit marks so obvious to general observers. The scarlet pimpernel of the fields, and the yellow pimpernel of the woods; the water violet, which raises its purple and white flowers above the stream; the cyclamen, whose white blossoms often grace our parlours in early spring; the American cow-slip, and the pretty and rare chickweed winter green, which was a favourite plant with Linnaeus,—are all included, with many others, in the primrose order.

THE MOUNTAIN PRIMROSE.

The traveller hastened on his way,
He sought to reach that mountain's brow,
And often feared he, lest the day,
Which fast was gaining on him now,
Should see him stretched upon the snows,
Wearied and spent ere it should close.

He knew, that either voice or sound,
 Though echoed by the mountain's side,
Would fall unheard upon the ground;—
 He knew, that o'er the landscape wide,
Nor herdsman's song, nor convent bell,
Of human hearts or homes should tell.

A sad and lonely feeling came
 Upon that weary wanderer's heart,
A shivering o'er his manly frame,—
 He seemed from human ties apart;
For in those regions, cold and wild,
Were none who loved, were none who smiled.

He gazed in sadness on the snow,
 And wondering spied a floweret's bloom;
He stooped to gather it, and lo,
 A primrose grew amid the gloom!
And to his anxious spirit brought
A cheerful home—a gladdening thought.

It wore not just the modest hue,
 Of that which in his native dell,
Impearled with early morning's dew,
 Of spring and pleasant days would tell;
But a wild primrose was it still,
Smiling upon that dreary hill.

And to his fancy, in that hour,
It seemed a messenger from home,
And its sweet fragrance had the power,
As, o'er the blue sea, it had come
To tell, for him were uttered there,
The words of love, the voice of prayer.

Companionless he now might be,
Yet were there some in that loved spot,
Who, or in sorrow or in glee,
Never their parted one forgot;
He knew that when the wild flowers blew,
They sighed for him who loved them too.

For he in other times had strayed
To seek this blossom in the wood,
Or with his mirthful sister played,
In haunts of loveliest solitude,
And wreathed for her the primrose fair,
Or placed it in her garden there.

Oh, who that e'er in mournful hour
Has seemed as if alone on earth,
Has never hailed with joy, a flower,
That gave to happier feelings birth,
And won his spirit back from gloom,
To hope and love—to friends and home!

A. P.

CHAPTER III.

VIOLET—LOVE OF THE VIOLET IN CHILDHOOD—SITUATIONS OF VIOLETS—VIOLETS OF PÆSTUM—AUTUMN VIOLETS—VIOLETS IN CANADA—DOG VIOLET—REGARD OF POETS FOR THE VIOLET—VIOLETS OF STRATFORD—VIOLET IN THE EAST—ORIGIN OF NAME—RARITY OF SWEET VIOLET IN SCOTLAND—VIOLET SHERBET—USE OF VIOLET IN MEDICINE—GALL ON STEM OF VIOLET.

“Fast fading violets covered up with leaves.”—*Keats*.

VIOLETS, the white and the blue! have we not all hunted after the violets with hearts brimful of enjoyment, as we looked up first at the sunny sky, and then on the banks of the green lane where we wandered; or, almost too busy for a selection, gathered them as they lay scattered plentifully in our pathway? Where is the heart to which the wild violet does not speak of child-

hood? Where is he to whom its odour does not breathe of holiday seasons and healthful joy? How well can they who spent their childhood in the country, and knew the delights of a little garden of their own, share in the feelings with which Miss Bowles describes the simple beauties of her garden plot!

“ And thriving plants were there, though not of price,
No puny children of a foreign soil,
But hardy natives of our own dear earth;
From many a field, and bank, and streamlet side,
Transplanted, careful, with the adhering mould.
The primrose, with her large indented leaves,
And many blossoms, pale, expanded there,
With wild anemone and hyacinth,
And languid cowslip, lady of the mead;
And violets’ mingled lines of every sort,
Blue, white and purple. The more fragrant white,
E’en from that very root, in many a patch,
Extended wide, still scents the garden round.”

Like its companion the primrose, the violet is a native of both hemispheres, and hardily defies the blasts of the Alpine mountain, often growing at a height far above the level of the sea; while in our own woods and meadows, it

braves the east winds of the early spring. Its blossom cheers the bleak Norway and the snowy Magellan. It blooms in winter beneath the tall palm of Africa; furnishes the poet of Arabia with a subject of song, or a choice simile, and bids the native of Syria or China turn from his rich roses and gorgeous chrysanthemums, to mark its humbler beauty. It is abundant in the isles of the Mediterranean, and was constantly seen in the Athenian market, among the flowers which were there exposed to sale. Even when the snow covered the ground, the Athenians succeeded in rearing it in their gardens, and it was to be found in Athens in almost every season.

The far-famed roses of the ancient Pæstum, which bloomed twice in the year, and which "now a Virgil, now an Ovid, sang," were said to arrest the voyager on his course by their delicious odours; but Pæstum equally boasted of its violets, "which," says Mr. Rogers, in a note on a passage in his 'Pleasures of Memory,' "were as proverbial as the roses, and mentioned

by Martial." That ancient city is changed now, in all but its flowers, yet—

“The air is sweet with violets running wild,
'Mid broken sculptures, and fallen capitals.”

The author of 'The Backwoods of Canada,' speaking of this flower says, "of violets we have here every shade of colour, size, and shape, looking only like the delightful *viola odorata* (sweet Violet) of our home woodlands; yet I know not why we should quarrel with these meek daughters of the spring, because they want the fragrance of their more favoured sisters. Many of your wood violets, though very beautiful, are also devoid of scent; here variety of colour ought to make some amends for want of perfume. We have violets of every shade, of blue, some veined with purple, others shaded with a darker hue. We have the delicate white, pencilled with purple; the bright brimstone, coloured with black veining; the pale primrose with dark blue veins—the two latter are remarkable for the luxuriance and size of their

leaves—the flowers spring in bunches, several from each joint, and are succeeded by large capsules, covered with thick white cottony down. There is a species of violet that grows in the woods, the leaves of which are exceedingly large, so are the seed-vessels; but the flower is so small and insignificant, that it is only to be observed by a close examination of the plant; this has given rise to the vague belief that it blooms underground. The flowers are of a pale yellow.”

In our English meadows it is very common for the same root which supplied us with the spring violet, to blossom again in winter, and it will sometimes yield a fine but less scented flower at Christmas. Besides the sweet purple violet (*Viola odorata*) and its white variety, there are five native species. The common dog violet (*Viola canina*) often gives a blue or lilac colour to the spot of rugged rock where it hangs its cheerful clusters. It may be seen in the midst of summer, when the fragrant violet has left us, enlivening the moist bank, and flourishing under

the shady hedge, or on the chalky moor, where nothing else mingles with the short grass but the stunted daisy and the little eyebright, or the wild thyme. Like our wild briar or dog-rose, it probably received its specific name to mark its inferiority to the scented kind. The latter flower has not, however, lost much by exchanging its old for its modern appellation, for it was formerly called canker, and we have in Shakespeare, "I would rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose to his grace."

Several very beautiful violets are reared in our gardens. The double purple violet (*Viola purpúrea pléna*), and the softly tinged Neapolitan violet (*Viola pállida pléna*), with its pleasant odour, are among the most generally cultured kinds.

In the neighbourhood of Stratford-upon-Avon there are some extensive grounds upon which the violet is reared, for the purposes of the chemist. Like the lavender and rose grounds of Surrey, these spots, though fragrant, are not beautiful; and the flower loses from its associa-

tions, much of the loveliness which belongs to it in its native woodlands.

A few years since, when this flower was the emblem of Napoleon's party, and that general was called *le père la violette*, a small bunch of violets hung up in the house, or worn about the person of a Frenchman, characterised his politics, as certainly as once in our own country the red or white rose bespoke the adherence of the wearer to the house of York or Lancaster.

Many ancient fables have accounted for the origin of the name of violet; for not to modern poets only has the flower been an object of beauty. From Homer, down to our own Byron and Wordsworth, few poets have failed to mention it. To one, it has suggested the image of a secluded maiden; to another, a beautiful eye has seemed a violet dropping dew. We are all acquainted with Shakspeare's beautiful comparison:—

“ That strain again—it had a dying fall;
Oh! it came o'er my ear, like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odours.”

Perhaps of the various etymologies assigned to the name, that may be truest which derives its origin from the word *Vias* (wayside), whence its sweet fragrance often greets the wanderer in the country.

In former times various flowers bore the name of violet. Thus the snowdrop was called the bulbous or narcissus violet; the wallflower was termed the Garnesee violet, and in French, *Viole jaune*. The plant now commonly known by the name of honesty, had, in addition to that of moonwort, the appellation of Strange violet; and two species of gentian were called, one the autumn bell-flower, or Calathian violet, and another the Marion's violet. The periwinkle, now generally known in France by the name of *Per-venche*, went, in other times, by that of *du lisseron*, or *Violette des sorciers*; and our own favourite spring-flower was called, in distinction from the others, the March violet, and by its French synonyme of *Violette de Mars*.

A wine made from the flowers of the sweet violet was much used by the Romans, and the

sherbet of the Turks is composed of violet syrup, mingled with water. The syrup so much used in the East, is made either from roses or violets, and is an invariable accompaniment at oriental entertainments. Mr. Lane, in his notes on the 'Arabian Nights,' relates one of the Mahommedan traditions of this flower: "The prophet said of the violet, 'The excellence of the extract of violets above all other extracts, is as the excellence of me above all the rest of the creation; it is cold in summer, and it is hot in winter:'" and another tradition asserts, that "the excellence of the violet is as the excellence of El Islam above all other religions." The author, like most other travellers in the East, gives his testimony to the delicious flavour of the violet sherbet.

The sweet violet is now rare in Scotland, yet it would seem that it once flourished among the Highland glens, for the Highland ladies formerly used a preparation from it as a cosmetic. Professor Hooker quotes some lines, translated from the Gaelic, which prove that the cosmetic

was once in high esteem. "Anoint thy face with goat's milk, in which violets have been infused, and there is not a young prince upon earth who will not be charmed with thy beauty." Probably the goat's milk was the most efficacious ingredient in the composition.

The violet of India bears its blossom in an erect position, while our own native flower hangs down its head. The seed of the latter plant is contained in a capsule, and projected, when ripe, with considerable force from the stem. It has been remarked by Professor Rennie, that the drooping position of the purple petals, shaded still more by the large green flower-cup, serves as an umbrella to protect the seed, while unripe, from the rains and dews which would injure it. As soon as the seed is matured, and the little canopy is no longer wanted, the flower rises, and stands upright upon its stem; and as the observer marks these changes, he is reminded of the care of Him who, while guiding all things amidst the vast range of the universe, forgets not even the flower of the field.

The sweet violet was formerly much used as a remedy in complaints of the lungs; but the great changes which have been of late years made by chemistry, have led to the conclusion that it is inefficacious. A syrup formed of these flowers is, however, much used by chemists, to detect the presence of acids and alkalies.

Some of our most beautiful species of butterfly feed entirely upon the sweet violet. The stem of this plant often presents, during winter, a swelled and spongy appearance. This is caused by insects, the eggs of which were deposited on the stalk during the preceding summer. The little animal, upon being hatched, finds its food ready for it; and, penetrating into the plant, disturbs its juices, and causes this excrescence. The punctures of several insects, chiefly of the genus *Cynips*, give this swelled appearance to several other plants. They cause the small red excrescences common on the leaves of many species of willow tree; and a similar production at the end of its branches has given its name to the rose willow (*Salix helix*). The mossy balls

which grow upon rose trees, and the oak galls procured from the south of Europe, for the manufacture of ink, are formed by the same process. The galls of one kind of willow (*Sálix pomífera*) are even agreeable to the taste, and are valued as a delicacy in eastern countries.

We have too many cultured violets, to render a separate description of them desirable. They make a pretty addition to the garden in spring. It is the wild sweet violet, however, with its blue or white petals, which is the chief favourite of the tribe, on account of its connexion with scenes and seasons dear to all. If we except the daisy, there is no flower of the wood or meadow which has been so long and so often celebrated. Among those early wandering bards, the Troubadours, it was considered the loveliest of all flowers; and the far-famed prize of a golden violet, which was given at Toulouse, to him who produced the best poetical composition, not only shewed the estimation in which these poets held it, but served to increase and continue the poetic admiration of the flower,

The poem on the Golden Violet, which that lamented lady, Mrs. Maclean, wrote some years since, has made the subject of the floral prize familiar to most readers. The floral games of Toulouse were instituted by Clemence Isaure, a lady of the fourteenth century; and she is represented as sending, during a weary imprisonment, her chosen flower, the violet, to her knight, that he might wear it in honour of her.

The violet order (*Violariæ*) consists chiefly of hardy and fragrant plants, some of them useful in medicines, and chiefly inhabiting cold and temperate climates or mountainous regions. They have all a singular power of projecting their seeds to a considerable distance, and often with much force, from the spots on which they grow.

There is included in this order, besides the flowers which we always call violet, a genus much resembling them, termed *Ionidium*. These flowers are not very common, and have not yet even received an English name. Another genus

only of plants belongs to it, the flowers of which are termed *Sauvagesia*, after Monsieur Sauvages, a French botanist. They would not, by the general observer, be thought much to resemble the common violet.

CHAPTER IV.

HEART'S-EASE—WILD SPECIES OF THIS FLOWER—FLOWER SHOWS—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FLORIST AND THE BOTANIST—ORIGIN OF VARIOUS NAMES OF THE HEART'S-EASE.

“The Pansy freaked with jet.”—*Milton*.

It is not customary, in popular language, to term the heart's-ease a violet; yet such it really is. Two species of the pansy violet grow wild in Great Britain. This flower and the dahlia seem to have taken the place in the esteem of the florist, once engaged by the auricula and tulip; and its culture has, of late years, received great attention. The large and handsome varieties now produced, so beautiful in colour, so well shaped, and in many cases so fragrant of violet odour, prove that the flower is well worth the care bestowed upon it. The frequent occur

rence of flower shows in our large towns, has had great effect in exciting attention to its improvement; and few of our floral ornaments are exhibited more often on these occasions, when so much pleasure is given to the lover of flowers, and so much encouragement to their skilful cultivators.

Flowers, it is true, can never be seen to so great an advantage as when beheld blooming in the garden or on the country landscape, when they are accompanied by so many things that are beautiful on the green earth, and where a blue sky is over all. Besides, a nosegay, however tastefully disposed, will not allow the unrestrained display of that gracefulness of arrangement in the leaves and stems of flowers, which is peculiar to each when viewed singly. We shall perhaps in a few years see at these pleasing shows, less of that desire of exhibiting something strange or uncommon, which seems now so prevalent; and simple elegance of grouping may be thought more desirable, than present modes of arrangement. Dahlias placed

together to resemble peacocks, and other flowers clustered to imitate parasols, or similar uninteresting objects, often greatly destroy the pleasure which flowers in their natural simplicity would convey, and seem scarcely less to amuse by their absurdity, than to offend by their tastelessness.

The taste of the botanist and florist are, indeed, often somewhat at variance. To the botanist, the wild flower, or the flower little changed by culture, is an object of more interest than the highly-cultivated one, as it affords him better means for pursuing his study of plants. He considers the blossoms which have been by the gardener's aid rendered double, or otherwise altered, as having an artificial character, and in botanical language such flowers are often called monsters. Few of my readers will perhaps agree with the sentiments of the German botanist, Wildenow, who remarks upon the subject of highly-cultured flowers, "Florists value them, more especially amateurs, for they have acquired so unnatural a taste as to despise nature in its

simplicity, and with care often transplant these deformities into their garden." Few, indeed, will look upon the rich double wallflowers, or stocks of the parterre, with the displeasure with which this gentleman would regard them.

The florist, by erring on the other hand, may justly, however, deserve some censure, since singularity cannot equal beauty in appearance; yet surely there is no reason why we should not admire the blossoms both of the garden and the meadow, nor why the single and more quickly fading flower should win our regard exclusively, while the more permanent and showy full flower should be passed by as an object unworthy our notice.

The two wild species of pansy are the little yellow common heart's-ease (*Viola tricolor*), and the mountain pansy (*Viola lútea*). The former is common in hedges, but especially frequent in corn-fields, and is well known to every person accustomed to walk in them—to all to whom the song of the reaper, or the loud laugh of the little gleaner, sounds as an invitation to

wander in the country. It is in bloom during the whole of the summer, and although varying considerably in size and colour, it is easily distinguished from any other species of violet, and is always shaped like the garden heart's-ease. It is commonly a small flower, of a delicate sulphur colour, with a little spot of purple on its lowest petal.

The yellow mountain violet (*Viola lútea*), though usually of a pale yellow, is sometimes found with its petals of a deep purple, or of a mingled tint. This species is always much larger than that of the corn-field, and is peculiar to mountainous pastures. It is common in Scotland and Wales, and in the northern parts of England, but unknown in the more level districts of southern counties.

Our garden pansies have been introduced hither from various parts of the continent. Germany, Switzerland, and France, have furnished us with several kinds, and the cold Siberia, which has contributed so little to our garden-bed, has yet yielded us the pansy.

Pansy, heart's-case, three-faces-under-a-hood, herb-trinity, kit-run-about, and love-and-idleness, are among the many names by which this flower is familiarly known. Owing to its power of throwing the seed to a distance, the plant often quite overruns the garden, and intrudes itself where most unwelcome.

If we pause to look upon a neglected spot of ground, once a garden, and still "where many a garden-flower grows wild," we are sure to find the pansy. I have seen garden pansies scattered over a field, which was near a large garden ground, so plentifully, as to give it in spots quite a purple colour. Miss Martineau tells us that many kinds are common in meadows in America, and says, that as early as February, the fields about Washington are quite gay with their flowers.

In the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the poet alludes to this flower. After describing the uselessness of Cupid's aim at the heart of the maiden queen, the poet says,

“ Yet marked I, where the bolt of Cupid fell,
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purpled with love's wound,
And maidens call it Love in Idleness.”

Neither is heart's-ease a modern appellation merely of the flower: John Bunyan represents the guide as saying to Christiana and her children, of a boy who was singing beside his sheep, “ Do you hear him? I will dare to say this boy leads a merrier life, and wears more of that herb called heart's-ease in his bosom, than he that is clothed in silk and purple.”

Pansy, one of its oldest names, is a corruption of the French word *Pensée* (thought), “ There's pansies, that's for thought.” Ben Jonson says—

“ Now the shining meads
Do boast the paunse, lily, and the rose,
And every flower doth laugh as zephyr blows.”

And this orthography would give the sound of the French word much more nearly than our modern mode of writing it.

The name of *pensée* is still retained in France,

and to the French this flower conveys a far different meaning from that which it bears to us. Its familiar name of heart's-ease renders it to us a pleasing emblem—to our gay neighbours its name of thought presents a sad one. "May they be far from thee," is a motto affixed to the little painted group of pansies, mingled with marigolds (called *Soucis*, cares), which is sometimes given as an offering of friendship, by a French lady. Alas, for the boasted language of flowers! time and place seem greatly to alter its meaning. The very marigolds, which now stand as an emblem of care, were in former times said by our old herbalist Gerarde, to be "great comforters of the heart."

The celebrated Quesnay, founder of the Economists, who was physician to Louis XV. was called by that monarch his thinker. The great regard which Louis had for this nobleman, induced him to devise for him an armorial bearing, which consisted of three flowers of the pensée.

Among the pansies which cultivation has so

much improved, the one which seems most deservedly and permanently admired, is the dark purple flower (*Viola amoëna*). Its rich petals have a surface like velvet, and it is often very large. Each year, however, seems to produce a reigning favourite among the pansies, and many florists value highly the amber brown-coloured flowers. Gardeners bestow upon the numerous varieties of heart's-ease so many names, sometimes in honour of queens or princesses, and sometimes in commemoration of those who have been successful in their culture, that no botanist can pretend to a knowledge of them all. One variety, called the monkey-faced pansy, is very singular. Its similarity to the face of an ape may escape observation, but if once perceived, it is impossible to look at the flower without being reminded of it. It is in this respect, like those landscapes, which if regarded aright, are found to represent the face of an individual. We look with pleasure at the picture; but when we find that a broken arch resembles an eye, and that a nose is discernible in the mountain

peak, which had just impressed us with its sublime beauty, the object loses its charm for the future, and is only valued for its singularity.

The remarks made in the former chapter respecting the properties of violets in general, apply equally to the heart's-ease.

CHAPTER V.

ROSEMARY—FORMER USE OF ROSEMARY AT FUNERALS
—FUNERAL CUSTOMS IN SOUTH WALES—VIRTUES
FORMERLY ATTRIBUTED TO ROSEMARY—ITS USE ON
FESTIVE OCCASIONS—HONEY OF NARBONNE—DERIVA-
TION OF NAME OF ROSEMARY—INTRODUCTION OF PLANT
INTO ENGLAND—LABIATE FLOWERS—WILD THYME—
BETONY—GROUND IVY—CAT MINT—GYPSY HERB—
SAGE—MINT—MINT JULEP OF THE AMERICANS—USE
OF MINT BY THE ANCIENT JEWS—BALM.

Come, funeral flower! who lovest to dwell
With the pale corse in lonely tomb,
And throw across the desert gloom
A sweet decaying smell;
Come, press my lips, and lie with me,
Beneath the lowly alder tree,
And we will sleep a pleasant sleep,
And not a care shall dare intrude,
To break the marble solitude,
So peaceful and so deep.—*Henry Kirke White.*

It is almost exclusively to times gone by that
we must refer the practice alluded to by the

poet, of placing rosemary in the coffin of the dead. There are, however, still a few retired villages of England which retain the customs of other days, and the funeral flower is there plucked, when the village mourners gather round the remains of the deceased.

In South Wales it is yet common for those who accompany the burial to carry each a sprig of rosemary or yew, which, when the body is laid in its last resting-place, they strew over the coffin. In many parts of Wales it is customary to plant the graves with shrubs and flowers. The nearest female relative of the dead, whether she be widow, mother, or sister, employs some poor person, as near as possible in age to the departed, and of the same sex, to keep the tomb strewed over with plants for several weeks, and to set slips of the mournful rosemary, or other suitable shrubs.

Our older poets refer continually to these simple customs.

“ Give her strewings, but not stir
Earth that lightly covers her,”

deceased, if a shower of rain fell and refreshed the evergreens immediately after they were planted, and it was this idea probably which originated the latter part of our familiar proverb:

“Blessed is the bride whom the sun shines on,
And blessed is the corpse which the rain raineth on.”

The rosemary (*Rosmarinus*) was formerly considered very ornamental. Its silvery foliage often covered the walls of the garden, when the clipped yew and box stood upon the terrace. In the days of Elizabeth it grew all over the walls of the gardens of Hampton Court. It is now seen more frequently in the cottage garden than elsewhere, and is generally cultivated there on account of the excellence it imparts to the honey gathered from it. It was once believed to possess the power of improving the memory, and our forefathers employed it as a means of invigorating the mental faculties, but it has now lost its repute.

To these supposed medicinal virtues it may be attributed that rosemary was so long regarded as the emblem of remembrance.

“ There’s rosemary for you—that’s for remembrance :
I pray you, love, remember,”

said the sad Ophelia ; and it was as an emblem of kindly thought that it was used both at the funeral and the marriage ceremony. Parkinson, in his ‘ Garden of Flowers,’ after having recounted the various uses of bay-leaves, as “ good both for the sick and sound, both for the living and the dead, and fit to crown or encircle, as with a garland, the heads of the living, and to sticke and decke forthe (forth) the bodies of the dead, so that from the cradle to the grave we have still use of it, we have still need of it,” goes on to say, “ Rosemary is almost of as great use as bayes, as well for civil as physical purposes ; for civil uses, as all doe know, at weddings, funerals, etc., to bestow among friends.”

But it was not among the herbalists and apothecaries merely that rosemary had its reputation for peculiar virtues. The celebrated doctor of divinity, Roger Hacket, did not disdain to expatiate on its excellences in the pulpit.

In a sermon which he entitles 'A Marriage Present,' and which was published in 1607, the following curious remarks occur. Speaking of the powers of rosemary, he says, "it overtoppeth all the flowers in the garden, boasting man's rule. It helpeth the brain, strengtheneth the memorie, and is very medicinable for the head. Another property of the rosemary is, it affects the heart. Let this rosmarinus, this flower of men, ensigne of your wisdom, love and loyaltie, be carried, not only in your hands, but in your hearts and heads."

The spiced ale and wine which filled the tankards at the feasts of former days, were flavoured by the rosemary sprig, and one cannot help wondering at the taste of our forefathers, when we find that the liquor was thought to be greatly improved by a strong flavour of this plant, with which it was stirred when brought to table. Among the Christmas festivities which were held in former years, when Father Christmas and his attendants were personated, New Year's Gift was represented by a

man "wearing a blue coat, and holding in his hand a sprig of resemmary." The boar's head too, that famous dish, which held the place of our roast beef on the Christmas table, was duly "crested with bays and rosemary;" and the silver leaves of this shrub mingled with the shining holly and yellow-green mistletoe, when the houses were annually decked with greens. In those days certain greens were used to deck the rooms and churches, at various seasons of the year. Thus the mistletoe, holly, and rosemary, were displaced by box, and afterwards by other plants, as the different festivals and saints' days occurred. This we learn from Herrick :

"Down with the rosemary, and so,
Down with the baies and mistletoe,
Down with the holly, ivie, all
Wherewith ye deck the Christmas hall;
No one least branch leave there behind,
For look how many leaves there be
Neglected there, maids 'tend to me,
So many goblins ye shall see."

The rosemary blossoms during the frosts of

winter, bearing a purple flower, of the shape which is called by botanists labiate, on account of its resemblance to the lips. A waxy substance exudes from this plant; and the Hungary water, so useful to bathe the head and face affected by cold, is made chiefly from the oil procured by distillation, from every part of this shrub, but said to exist more particularly in the flower-cups.

The celebrated honey of Narbonne is thought to derive its peculiar excellence from the abundance of rosemary trees, which invite the bees of that country. The Narbonne honey almost rivals in fame that of Mount Ida, which was said to be the food of Jupiter, and the excellence of which is attested by modern travellers. The Narbonne honey may be imitated by mingling an infusion of rosemary flowers with the common produce of the hive.

This plant bears a very elegant name; the two Latin words which form *Rosmarinus*, signifying "the dew of the sea." Its native place of growth is the neighbourhood of the sea-breezes,

and the sailor, as he reaches some of the rocks of southern Europe, is greeted by its fragrant breath, as by a sweet welcome from the land. It was once so common in Languedoc, that it was used as the ordinary firewood of the inhabitants, and it is still abundant there. It would not be supposed to be a flower of the desert, yet travellers over the plains of Africa have found here and there a few sprigs, both of this plant and our garden lavender, and have welcomed them in a spot where vegetation is so rare, and so usually different in its character.

The plant went formerly by the name of *Rosmarinum coronarium*; "that is to say," says Lyte, "rosemarie, whereof they make crowns and garlands."

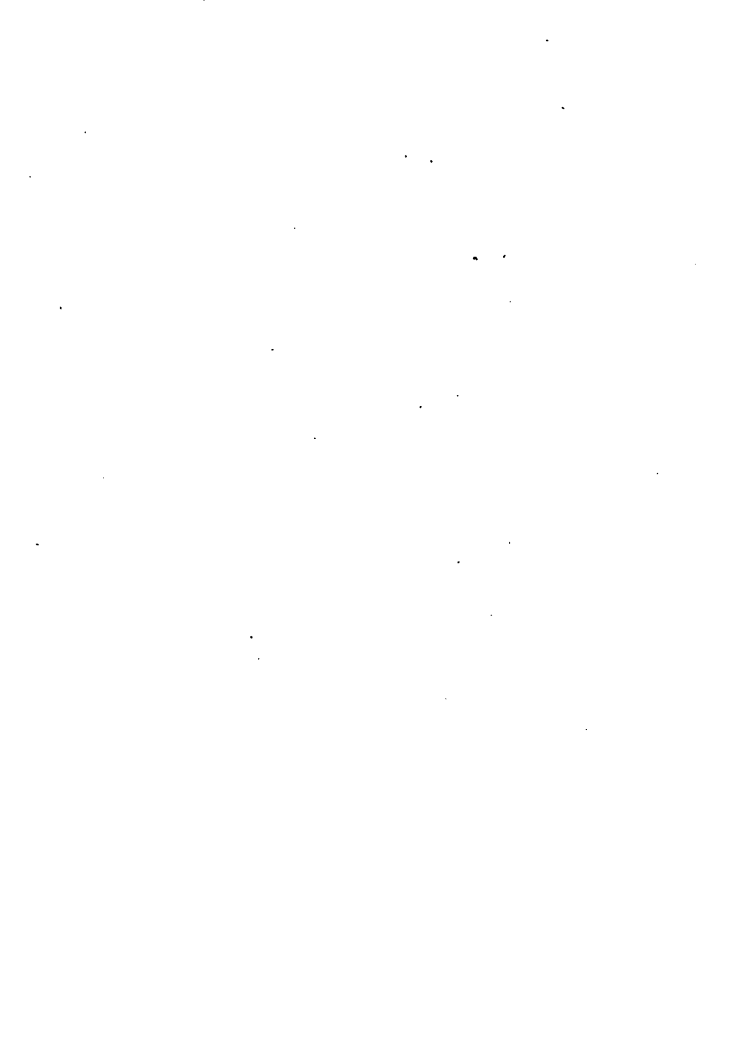
We have in the garden two species of the shrub—the common rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), and a less frequent plant, a native of Chili, the *Rosmarinus chilensis*. The former species is thought to have been introduced into Britain by the Monks, to whom we are indebted for several plants. As they were during mar-

years the only persons who attended to the medical properties of herbs, it is to their care in tending them, and dispersing them throughout the country, that we owe many valuable vegetables. The garden of the monastery was better stocked than the garden of the palace; and if the cultivators sometimes attributed to plants, as in the case of the rosemary, a degree of healing virtue which they did not possess, yet were they often made the means of invigorating the health of the patient, who knew no other remedy.

The rosemary belongs to the labiate order of the botanist (*Labiatae*), and every reader who knows this plant, or the lavender, may recognise this order by the shape of the flowers. The plants contained in it are, too, very similar in their properties. Not one of them is of an unwholesome nature, and they are throughout characterised by a fragrant volatile oil, and by their stomachic and cordial virtues. The oil which they yield contains so great a portion of camphor, as to have suggested the propriety of







cultivating some of these plants for the production of that drug. Some of them are to be found in every garden, and under every hedge. Who does not know the sweet wild thyme of our meadows? Who has not enjoyed the delicious odour which has arisen as he walked over the thymy grass, or marked how the bees hovered about it, as if they thought it more fragrant than any of the neighbouring plants? How often does the summer wanderer lie down on the thyme-covered bank to enjoy the pure delights of the scented air, and rise from it to join with the good man who thanked his God for his pleasant dreams. When the ancients wished to express their sense of the Attic elegance of the style of their writers, they said that they smelt of thyme; and still is the wild thyme growing luxuriantly over mossy banks, and in shady glens of Greece, as richly as it clusters on the carpet of our own mountains and plains.

Another common plant of the labiate kind, which often blooms under the hedges, its spike of purple flowers bearing somewhat the appear-

ance of the dead nettle, is the betony (*Betónica officinális*). This plant, if eaten while fresh, will produce intoxication. Then there is the sweet-marjoram, whose name (*Origánum*) signifies the joy of the mountain; the pretty ground-ivy (*Glechóma hederácea*), which was used in ale until hops were introduced into this country; the cat-mint, and many others equally common. Cats are very fond of the latter plant; but there is an old legend, that they will destroy it if cultivated; thus the proverb:

“ If you set it,
Cat's won't eat it.”

A common labiate plant, the water horehound (*Lycopus Europaéus*), which grows on river banks, and bears white flowers and crumpled leaves, received its old name of Egyptian's herb, “bycause,” says an old writer, “of the rogues and runnegates, which call themselves Egyptians, and doe colour themselves black with this herbe.” It is still called gipsy-wort, though the gipsies of modern days are said to

use walnut leaves for this purpose ; but the wandering tribes, with their picturesque encampments, seem to have found more favour in these times, and we seldom hear of them now as "rogues and runnegates."

Some of the species of sage (*Sálvia*), which have been introduced from abroad, are plants of great beauty. Many kinds of sage have been used as substitutes for tea. The Chinese prefer sage tea to their native product; and the Dutch import a great quantity of sage leaves into that country for their use. One of our wild sage plants (*Salvia pratense*) is very handsome, and bears a large purple flower, which is highly ornamental. The various kinds of mint (*Méntha*) belong to the same order. The Jews of ancient times strewed this plant over the floors of their synagogues, on account of its agreeable scent; and the mint-julep of the Americans is well known to travellers in that country. This "compound," which in the southern and western states is often called hail-storm, is made of wine and a small quantity of brandy, and is a very

favourite beverage. The liquor is brought to table with a bunch of mint, through which it percolates before it reaches the drinker's lips.

The common plant, balm, which is still much esteemed in villages, and frequent in country gardens, was a plant of great renown, as it was thought to have a peculiar influence over bees. Pliny says (Dr. Holland's translation), "touching baulm, if beehives be rubbed all over and besmeared with the juice thereof, the bees will never away." These little insects seem indeed to have a peculiar predilection for this plant, as they certainly hover about it with great delight, and revel among its small blossoms. Many more plants of the labiate order might be mentioned, but those now enumerated will sufficiently shew the general nature of the rest.

CHAPTER VI.

BUTTERCUP—MEADOW FLOWERS IN JUNE—SPEEDWELL
—WILD CRANESBILL—WILD SUCCORY—CHARMS OF
COUNTRY IN SUMMER—VARIOUS KINDS OF CROWFOOT—
ACRID PROPERTIES OF CROWFOOT—WATER CROWFOOT
—ITS USE—CELANDINE—RANUNCULACEOUS PLANTS—
CHRISTMAS ROSE—CLEMATIS—PEONY—LIVER WORT—
PHEASANT'S EYE—MARSH MARIGOLD—LARKSPUR—
FENNEL FLOWER—CUMMIN OF SCRIPTURE—COLUMBINE
—INGENUITY OF THE BEE.

“ Buttercups that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no.”

Wordsworth.

It would seem that modern poets have taken a great prejudice against those two flowers, the tulip and the buttercup. They seldom honour them with a stanza, except to adduce them as emblems of pride. Yet buttercups have had their day, when the older poets sung of them,

under the names of king-cups, or gold-cups, or leopard's-foot, or cuckoo-buds; names significant of their beauty, or of their connexion with the bird whose note is one of the first voices of the spring. The appearance of a meadow in summer, covered with the glossy yellow blossoms of this plant, is certainly such as may induce us to regard it as an ornament to the landscape, however little the farmer may value it as pasture. When

" Cuckoo buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight."

They have a very rich and beautiful aspect; and as we stand upon an eminence, and look down upon the thickly studded plain, or sit upon the meadow stile and look upon the wide expanse, coloured by the gay flower, we are charmed at beholding a field of gold.

Just at the period when the buttercup is blooming, the daisy and the blackthorn, the cowslip and the primrose, are putting on their spring attire. The hedges are full of leaves, and there is a scent of the violet in every green

lane. One species of buttercup or another decks the meadow through the summer, and the same spot furnishes us with numerous other floral attractions. The blue of the various little speedwells or germanders (*Verónica*) is deep and clear as the sky above them; the several species of the wild cranesbill (*Geranium*) are remarkable both for the bright pink and clear lilac tints of their blossoms, and for the elegant forms and arrangements of their round or lobed leaves, while the white and yellow blossoms of the bedstraw (*Gálium*), are like small stars thrown among the grasses. The clover perfumes the air; the wild succory, one of the gayest of our summer flowers, with its brilliant blue rays, the twining convolvulus, and the drooping bluebell, and the scabious, spring up in beauty and profusion. The hedges are filled with privet and foxglove, and briar roses, and honeysuckles, and these all render the sequestered meadow one of the most delightful haunts of the summer. The decrease of energy which is experienced during the warmer months of the year, serves

so greatly to enhance the pleasure of the quiet scenes of the country, that even those who are accustomed to the more artificial life of a town, are glad to retire for a season to the rural villa or cottage; while those who have spent their days chiefly amid country scenes, feel a peculiar longing to return to them. In the large city, whatever may be the season of the year or the time of day, the active pursuits of life are proceeding with ardour. Almost every passenger in the street is eager and intent; the perpetual whirl of carriages, and the noise of a large population, passing to and fro, dispel every idea of leisure, and are never felt to be so wearisome to those who in other days were accustomed to the country, as now, when the occasional sight of a tree covered with foliage, or the breath of soft summer air, or the song of an imprisoned bird, brings before the mind the rural pleasures of the past. Stretched upon the meadow bank, the thoughtful may consider, and the idle may dream; the poet may indulge reveries, which shall another day be embodied in numbers, and

become "thoughts that breathe and words that burn;" the painter may watch the effects of light and shadow—of form and colouring; and the wearied spirit lose in soft slumbers, the consciousness of sorrow, or indulge in pensive recollections, undisturbed by the soft melodies around him, which will rather mingle with his musings than interrupt them. The voices of the sweet summer, though they may not rouse to activity, have a soothing effect on the imagination. The stream murmurs its "quiet tune" so softly, that not one abrupt sound awakens the attention. The bee winds his horn in a prolonged and sonorous cadence, and the "drowsy herd," as Gray expressively calls them, low as they approach the pool, as if the heat of summer oppressed them so much that they were too idle to exert their voices, or to move their limbs, or to do aught but linger musing on the brink of the water. The clouds in their slow motions across the sky, and the lazy movement of the sheep, seem to have found their imitators in the footstep of the countryman, whose deliberate

pace forms a great contrast to the quick advance of the occupier of the city. The very winds are scarcely stirring, and

“ Rob not one light seed from the feathery grass,
But where the dead leaf falls there does it rest.”

Several kinds of crowfoot contribute to the gay clothing of the mead; but the bulbous-rooted species (*Ranunculus bulbosus*) is the flower generally termed the buttercup. Its round root procured for it, in former times, the name of St. Anthony's turnip; though it would have required a miracle to render these a wholesome diet for the hermit, as they are when raw of an emetic property, and have an acrid flavour, and even when boiled are not nutritious. It was formerly thought that crowfoot mingled with the pasture improved its nature, and that the butter yielded by cows which fed on them, was of a superior quality. This opinion is now changed, and it is well known that cows avoid as much as possible eating the buttercup, while several kinds of crowfoot are highly poisonous to cattle.

On some pasture lands, in those counties where the produce of the dairy receives particular attention, women and children are employed to destroy the crowfoot, which they do either by pulling up the root, or by plucking off the flower, and preventing it from dispersing its seed. The root of the buttercup is of a highly stimulating property if taken in an uncooked state, and its juice will occasion sneezing; but boiling deprives this as well as many other vegetable productions of its noxious qualities. Drying in the sun has a similar effect upon it, so that the hay is not at all injured by its acrimonious nature.

All the species of crowfoot possess the power of raising blisters upon the skin; and, when judiciously applied, are sometimes as serviceable, in cases of inflammation, as an application of cantharides, and are attended with a less degree of suffering. From unskilful management, however, in the method of using them, very painful results have occasionally followed; and this is the more frequent, as they are more generally

administered by persons ignorant both of the nature of disease and medicines, than by the regular practitioner; and in such hands, it is very evident that those remedies only can be pronounced safe which possess little power. The wounds on his limbs which the mendicant sometimes finds it profitable to make, as an appeal to the benevolence of the compassionate, are said to be caused by an application of this plant.

The leaves of two species of clematis (a plant of the same natural order as the ranunculus) are also used for this purpose. The Ostiacks of Siberia are accustomed, in cases of inflammation, to produce a blister on the skin by means of a fungus which grows on the birch-tree; and the people of the Hebrides use, almost entirely, the vegetable blister of two species of ranunculus,—the celery-leaved kind, and the sort called lesser-spear-wort; both plants growing by lakes or ditches.

Our spring buttercup is the bulbous-rooted crowfoot. It commences blooming in May.

The properties of the creeping crowfoot (*Ranúnculus répens*) are very similar to those of the spring buttercup. The acrid crowfoot (*Ranúnculus ácris*) received its specific name from Linnæus, on account of its possessing the vesicatory principle in a great degree. Cattle generally refuse this plant, but if they eat it it will blister their mouths. Instances are common in which the wanderer in the meadow has lain down to sleep with a handful of these flowers beside him, and has awakened to find the skin of his cheek pained and irritated to a high degree, by the acrid blossoms having lain near it.

The water ranunculus (*Ranúnculus aquátalis*) is a handsome ornament of pools and streams. Its leaves vary according to the depth, or stillness, or velocity of the water in which it grows; those leaves lying on the surface having a round lobed shape, while those which are immersed, are cut into a number of small fibres.

These variations in the leaves of aquatic plants are familiar to botanists. The leaves of floating plants are also peculiar, as being totally free

from any down or hair, on either surface; but if a water plant be removed to a dry soil, its leaves, if before much divided, become more expanded in shape, and are soon covered with hairs. The texture of the plant becomes firmer, and adapts itself to an upright, instead of a floating position, and commonly it becomes altogether smaller than when in its native waters.

It is peculiarly remarkable that the aquatic species of ranunculus should be the only one wholly destitute of noxious qualities, since the fact of its growing in watery places would, in most instances, lead us to determine a plant, if at all of a suspicious family, as certainly dangerous. It is well known that many of our wild umbelliferous plants, which, when growing on dry lands, are of an aromatic nature, are converted by the presence of streams into deadly poisons. Mr. Loudon relates of this species, that in the neighbourhood of Ringwood, on the borders of the Avon, some of the cottagers feed their cows and even horses almost solely upon it. A quantity is daily collected, and brought

in a boat to the edge of the water. The cows when allowed to eat it consume it with great avidity, and would eat so large a quantity, that the farmer is compelled to limit their allowance. One agriculturist supported a horse and several cows exclusively upon this food, and the small quantity of grass which they could find on a common, near the river; and as they could always find a sufficient supply of the ranunculus—this group of cattle only consumed about a ton of hay throughout the year.

This species is very plentiful in lakes, rivers, and ditches; its white flowers forming beautiful little patches upon the water during the early part of summer.

Those who are little acquainted with flowers, might not suppose that the glossy, starry celandine, which Wordsworth has so praised, is also a ranunculus.

“ Ere a leaf is on the bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about its nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,

Spreading out thy glossy breast,
Like a careless prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth or none."

The celandine (*Ranunculus ficária*), which is also called smallwort, is of the same bright colour as the buttercup, but formed like a star, and its leaves are heart-shaped. In some of the northern parts of Europe, where vegetation is not very prolific, its leaves are boiled and eaten as greens. The plant grows all over England, in woods and meadows or barren commons, and under rich hedges, and peeps up in the garden among the hepaticas and primroses, or there outshines the daffodil. A number of small grain-like tubers lie around it, close to the surface of the earth, and induced the superstitious of less informed ages to report of this plant that it showered down wheat around it.

This cheerful little flower is called the lesser celandine, in distinction from the celandine, which is a totally different plant and not a *ranunculus*. In a rare old herbal, by Lyte,

which, according to the title-page, "was first set forth in the *Almaigne tongue* in 1578," the author, speaking of the larger celandine, gravely adds, "*Chelidonium*, that is to say, swallow herbe; bycause, as *Plinie* writeth, it was first found out by swallowes, and hath healed the eyes and restored sight to their young ones, that have had harme in their eyes, or have been blinde:" he tells us also that the lesser celandine received its English name from this, and was so called "bycause that it beginneth to spring and to flower at the coming of the swallowes, and withers at their returne."

Several foreign species of *ranunculus* grace our garden-beds during the summer season, their petals rich with the most glowing colours. They are not quite so much an object of culture to the florist as they were some years since; but their great beauty will prevent their being altogether neglected by those who admire flowers. The exotic species are wild in countries both of the north and south of Europe, as well as in some parts of North America. The

Asiatic ranunculus (*Ranunculus Asiaticus*) is a well-known and handsome flower. All the plants of this tribe possess an acrimonious principle. They received their name from *rana*, a frog, because many species like that animal frequent watery places.

The order termed by botanists, *ranunculaceæ* (of which the ranunculus is the type), comprehends some of our most brilliant garden plants. Several deadly poisons are among them, and very few can be pronounced wholly innocent in their properties. They generally prevail in cold moist climates, and when found within the tropics, inhabit mountainous situations only. To this order belongs the poisonous hellebore, one species of which, the black hellebore or Christmas rose (*Helleborus niger*), is one of our most beautiful winter garden ornaments. The ancients considered an extract of it as a wonderful remedy in mental disorders. It is a lovely flower, rivalling in whiteness the snow which often lies around it, and the snowdrop which rears its head above it. It is called the black

hellebore, to distinguish it from the two wild species which grow in our woods, its root being covered with a thick black skin. The fragrant white clematis, as well as the darker coloured kinds, belong to this order, as do also the bright and elegantly formed anemone, the globe flower, the "pæony spread wide," whose acrid root is useful in medicine, and a large number of the flowers of the summer garden. It includes the hepatica, with its pretty blue or pink blossoms, and its three-lobed leaves, which from their resemblance to the form of the liver, have given the plant its English name of liverwort, and induced our forefathers to fancy it must be a useful remedy in liver complaints. Then there is the pheasant's-eye, or Adonis, or as Gerard calls it, the rose-a-rubie, which is termed by the French, goutte-de-sang, because of the ancient fable which states it to have sprung from a drop of the blood of Adonis. It is a pretty crimson flower, very common in corn-fields in the southern counties of England, lifting its deep red cup among the green slender leaves

of the wheat and barley, long before they are ripening. The marsh marigold (*Caltha*), or as it was formerly called, the brave bassinet, is another ranunculaceous plant. Its young flower-buds form a good substitute for the capers which are procured from the caper bush of the continent.

The larkspur (*Delphinum*), of which one species is used in France as a cosmetic; the wolfsbane, or monkshood (*Aconitum*), with its lurid purple flowers, which the ancients thought the most deadly of all poisons, and were afraid to touch; and the fennel flower, called also familiarly, love-in-a-mist, are classed with them. The aromatic seeds of the latter (*Nigella*) are used in the East as pepper, and possess there much more pungency than in our climate. They are thought to be the cummin alluded to in Scripture, where our Saviour reprobated the Pharisees for their scrupulosity in minor things, and their neglect of important duties.

The columbine (*Aquilégia*) received its name

from aquila, an eagle. Dr. Darwin says of it, that it is called Columbine, in English, because its nectary represents the body of a bird, and the two petals standing on each side, its expanded wings, the whole resembling a nest of young pigeons, fluttering while their parent feeds them. This flower is often found growing wild in the neighbourhood of gardens, and it has been discovered in some spots of England, where it appears to be truly wild. Withering remarks of the blossom, “the elongated and curved nectary seems to bid defiance to the entrance of the bee, in search of the hidden treasure; but the admirable ingenuity of the sagacious insect is not to be defeated; for, on ascertaining the impracticability of effecting his usual admission, he, with his proboscis, actually perforates the blossom near the depôt of the honey, and thus extracts the latent sweets.” Those who examine flowers, may find the honeysuckle, or other tube-shaped blossoms, pierced in the same way by the little honey gatherer.

CHAPTER VII.

EVENING PRIMROSE—GARDEN ŒNOTHERA—SHEWY ŒNOTHERA — INTRODUCTION INTO ENGLAND OF EVENING PRIMROSE—SINGULAR MANNER OF EXPANSION—ASPECT OF COUNTRY LANDSCAPE DURING NIGHT—USE OF DARKNESS—SLEEP OF PLANTS—EXPANSION OF FLOWERS AT VARIOUS TIMES OF DAY—LIST OF TIMES AT WHICH MANY FLOWERS OPEN AND CLOSE—CHANGES OF THE INSECT WORLD IN TROPICAL CLIMATES.

Now came still evening on, and twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk; all but the wakeful nightingale.
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased; now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest; till the moon
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

Milton.

THE evening primrose (*Œnothera biennis*) is so common a flower, as to need no description.

Its pale yellow blossoms are to be found unfolded during evening, all the summer long, in almost every garden, whether that spot be the wide-spreading parterre of the rich, or the limited plot of the poor. Its gentle odour needs not, like that of most flowers, the strong influences of the sun to draw it forth, but is wafted upon the air of evening and night.

The *cænothemas* of the garden, of which there are nearly thirty species, are plants requiring little care and attention; they are handsome flowers, and have been introduced here chiefly from North and South America.

One of this genus, the showy *cænothema* (*Cenothéra speciosa*), which was brought into England from North America, in 1821, has been lately observed to secrete at the base of its corolla a sweet liquid. "This," says a correspondent, in a periodical work, "is glutinous enough to retain prisoner several species of moth, of the genus *sphinx*, especially those which frequent the vine, the bindweed, and the milk thistle."

The evening primrose, from having been so generally planted, has scattered its seeds over many a scene of uncultivated nature; and in Warwickshire, and some other counties, is found on hedge-banks, by meadow sides, on the borders of corn-fields, or similar spots, towering above many of the wild flowers which charm us in these places. It is, in works treating solely of British plants, often enumerated among them, as it may now be considered naturalized; but it is of American origin, and was unknown in this country until 1674, when it was introduced by the French. It is often cultivated on account of its roots, which are edible, and are said to act like olives, as an incentive to wine.

The petals of the evening primrose open in a manner so remarkable, as to claim our notice. The calyx has small hooks upon its upper extremity, by which it holds the flower together before expansion. The divisions of the calyx open gradually at the lower part, and shew the yellow flower, which for some time remains

closed at the upper part, by the hooks. The flower then suddenly opens about half-way, when it stops, and afterwards gradually completes its expansion, finally opening with a loud noise. It is sometimes half an hour performing this curious operation, which may be witnessed any summer evening.

Very few British flowers are open, like this, during the night; but in tropical countries, nightly-blooming flowers are common. Several species of creeping plants, as well as the Marvel of Peru (*Mirabilis jalapa*), have been termed by the French, *belle-de-nuit*, on account of this peculiarity. The night winds of India are scented with the large blue, lilac, or white blossoms of plants, of so magnificent an appearance that they well deserve their appellation of the "glory of the night."

The evening primrose opens generally at about six or seven o'clock in the evening.

The periodical opening of flowers is, in many cases, so regular, as not to vary five minutes throughout the season; but this is not the case

with this plant, as it is affected by the temperature of the air. Its time of unfolding is however sufficiently constant to justify its name, as it never fails to welcome the approach of evening, and to be all night the companion of the moon, while the other flowers are folded in sleep. Sometimes, when it has lost its vigour, it continues open by day as well as night.

We are so little abroad in the meadows or gardens during night, that many are little acquainted with the aspect of vegetation at that period. Most have, however, experienced some nights of the wakefulness which attends sickness or grief, or have "watched the stars out by the bed of pain." If, upon such occasions, we have gazed from a window into the thoroughfare of a populous city, we have been struck with its stillness. There is something almost overpowering in the solemnity which night spreads over the scene, lately so full of life. "When all that mighty heart is lying still," it seems as if the city were one vast cemetery—**emphatically, a "city of silence."** But our

window may have fronted field or garden, and so much light may have been shed over the landscape, by moon or stars, as to enable us to see the folded flowers; and the robinias and laburnums, with their drooping leaves. Here and there only, are to be seen a little cluster of the blossoms of night-flowering plants, which the dews serve only to animate and beautify, and from which an odour is borne sweetly to us upon the night-breeze. The country, however, seems not to lie in all the solemn stillness of the town, for its stillness is not heightened by the contrast with the scenes of the preceding day, and it is, at all times, comparatively at repose. The nightingale too is interrupting the silence with strains of melody, which seem as if they would rend her throat in the expression; and the bird of night, with its unearthly sound, flits ever and anon from the ivy, across the green.

“ Night's voices are awaking: from the lone
Elf-haunted cavern, hark their stilly calls.
The winds are lulled by their sweet whisperings,

The wearied flowers, earth's rainbows, lay them down,
With folded leaves in clusters."

Naturally as we shrink from darkness—even by instinct, before we have heard those fearful tales which make it terrific to childhood—still we can but contemplate the veil of night, with gratitude to the Beneficent Creator. Little need be said of the value of sleep to mankind; the daily awakening in strength, of the mind and body, which languidly sank to rest on the preceding evening, occurs to all, and is favoured by darkness.

But the sleep of the vegetable differs in one respect from that of the animal, that it is not caused by its exhausted powers; but when light, which acts as a stimulus, is withdrawn, then the stalks of compound leaves hang back, and fold their leaflets together, or the leaves droop over the flowers, or cover the fruits, so as to shelter them from the cold dews. This was termed by Linnæus, the sleep of plants, and said by him to be analogous to the action of spreading the wing, by which some birds shelter their young

during night. It is generally thought that Linnæus's term is somewhat hyperbolic; but that the cessation of the stimulus of light, and the constrained position of the flower and foliage, may be advantageous to the vegetable constitution, in a way somewhat similar to that in which it is beneficial to the animal system. Sir James Smith remarks, that as the infant requires a fuller measure of sleep than is needed by the man, so the young plant is more thoroughly closed during night than the older one.

All blossoms, if we except the few which, like the evening primrose, are open during night, are more or less affected, by what is termed the sleep of plants; and the leaves of leguminous plants, as the pea, the lupin, and the clover, experience it very sensibly. Pinnated leaves are more sensitive than any others. These are leaves, formed of a number of leaflets, growing on each side of one stalk, as in the tansy; and this plant will not only fold during darkness, but when the light is too powerful.

Many compound flowers, as the daisy, have their florets or rays in an erect posture in the night. Like

“ The marigold which goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises weeping.”

This sleep of the blossoms was discovered by Chaucer. He had all a poet's fondness for the daisy, which in his time was called, as it now is in France, by the name of Marguerite, and was considered an emblem of constancy in love. Chaucer would lie for hours on the greensward of the meadow, looking at it, and framing dreams of poesy, in which he represented trains of fair ladies and brave knights coming out to greet it. He visited the meadow with the sun, and saw the white or crimson-tipped petals of the little flower gradually unfold as his shining dispelled the darkness; and then he marked how evening came again, and its rays closed once more over its yellow disk, and the “silver droppes hanging in the leaves,” warned him that night was coming.

The appearance presented by vegetation during night is not, however, seen so plainly in a plant standing alone, as when it occurs in groups. "Thus," says Professor Lindley, "plants of corn, in which there is very little indication of sleep, when growing singly, exhibit this phenomenon very distinctly when observed in masses; their leaves becoming flaccid, and their ears drooping at night."

When by an eclipse of the sun darkness is spread over the face of nature at an unusual time, not only do the birds, mistaking the veil for that of night, betake themselves to their accustomed repose, but flowers and leaves are affected by it. This was observable during the last eclipse, in the garden pheasant's-eye (*Adonis autumnalis*). This flower, which usually closes for the night at four o'clock, folded up rapidly as the darkness occurred, which was some hours previous to its ordinary time of enfolding.

On the other hand, if the light of a candle be admitted during night, they will be roused

from their state of sleep, or they may be kept closed by preventing the admission of the dawn.

Although it is very evident that this peculiarity of the vegetable world had been noticed occasionally in earlier years, yet to Linnæus we are indebted for the most valuable and accurate information on the subject. It had not previously occupied the attention of the careful botanist; and though Chaucer and Shakspeare, and many others, had alluded to it, and many must have marked the flowers in their moonlight walks, and pondered over their changes, still little progress had been made in ascertaining the state of these facts. A circumstance which occurred in his own garden first led the Swedish naturalist to a series of investigations. A friend had sent him some seeds of a species of Lotus. The red flowers which sprung from them excited his admiration, and as his gardener was absent when they came in bloom, Linnæus, immediately upon his return, took him to the greenhouse to see this new floral treasure. It was evening,

and with a lantern they proceeded to the spot ; but what was the surprise and vexation of Linnæus at finding that his beautiful blossoms had quite disappeared ! He concluded that they had been eaten by insects ; but on returning the next morning to his greenhouse, he saw them in full beauty upon the same part of the plant on which he had left them the preceding day. Again in the evening he accompanied his gardener to visit the plants, and again the flowers were gone, while the next morning once more exhibited them in full glory. His gardener declared that his master must have mistaken, and that these could not be the same flowers, but must be fresh blossoms. Linnæus was too much of a philosopher to be satisfied with such an idle conclusion, and in the evening he examined the plant, carefully taking up leaf by leaf, until he discovered that the blossoms had been quite hidden by the drooping foliage. This lotus is a papilionaceous or butterfly-shaped flower, and he found upon looking farther, that the lupins and the garden acacias, and peas, and many more flowers simi-

larly shaped, were affected in nearly the same way by the influence of night.

But absence of light is not the only cause of the folding up of flowers. Many, both cultivated and wild flowers, are closed by the middle of the day. The common goat's-beard is frequently called by country people go-to-bed-at-noon, and the little pimpernel is safely enclosed in its calyx by twelve o'clock, while many a handsome garden flower shuts up during the afternoon. The causes of these differences have not yet revealed themselves to the naturalist. Linnæus enumerated the regular times of opening and closing of forty-six flowers, but as these observations were made at Upsal in Sweden, they do not exactly accord with the same flowers in our latitude. He also divides flowers into three kinds: 1st, Meteoric flowers, which being dependent upon the moisture or other circumstances of the atmosphere, are not punctual in their periods of expansion and closing. 2nd, Tropical flowers, which opening at morning and folding up when the sun goes down, close

earlier or later as the length of the day increases or declines; and lastly, Equinoctial blossoms, which unfold regularly at a stated hour, and have generally a determinate hour for commencing their periodical sleep.

Linnæus's dial of flowers, by which the time was shewn by the opening or folding of blossoms throughout the day, has always been interesting to lovers of gardens. Mrs. Hemans has a beautiful poem on the subject, of which the two following verses are the commencement.

'Twas a lovely thought to mark the hours
As they floated in light away,
By the opening and the folding flowers,
As they laugh to the summer's day.

Thus had each moment its own rich hue,
And its graceful cup and bell,
In whose coloured vase might sleep the dew,
Like a pearl in an ocean shell.

But that this poetical invention did not originate in Linnæus, we learn from a passage taken from Marvell's poem of the Garden—a poem less

generally known than that of Mrs. Hemans, and of some of the thoughts of which, that lady's stanzas seem but a fuller illustration.

“ How well the skilful gardener drew,
Of flowers and herbs this dial new !
Where, from above, the milder sun,
Does through a fragrant Zodiac run,
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers?”

In the “ Encyclopædia of Gardening,” Mr. Loudon has given a list of well-known flowers, with their respective periods of unfolding and folding in this climate, for the purpose of assisting those to the selection of suitable materials who may wish to form a floral dial.

The list is subjoined, as taken from that work, and the English names of the flowers are added :

Time of folding and unfolding of the following Flowers.

		H. M.	H. M.
Goat's-beard .	Tragopógon luteum .	*3 5	†9 10
Late-flowering Dandelion.	Leóntodon serótinum	4 0	12 1
Hawkweed	Pieris echioides . .	4 5	12 0
Alpine Hawk's- beard.	Crépis Alpína . . .	4 5	12 0
Wild Succory.	Cichórium íntybus .	4 5	8 9
Naked-stalked Poppy.	Papáver nudicaule .	5 0	7 0
Copper-coloured Day-lily.	Hemerocállis, fúlva .	5 0	7 8
Smooth Sowthistle	Sonchus láevis . . .	5 0	11 12
Blue-flowered Sow- thistle.	Sonchus Alpíus . . .	5 0	12 0
Field Bindweed	Convólulus arvénsis	5 6	4 5
Common Nipple- wort.	Lapsána comúnis .	5 6	10 0
Spotted Cat's-ear	Hypochæris maculáta	6 7	4 5
White Water-lily	Nymphaea álba . . .	7 0	5 0
Garden Lettuce	Lactúca satíva . . .	7 0	10 0
African Marigold	Tagétes erécta . . .	7 0	3 4
Mouse-ear Hawk- weed.	Hierácium pilosélla .	8 0	2 0
Proliferous Pink	Diánthus prolíferus .	8 0	1 0
Field Marigold	Caléndula arvénsis .	9 0	3 0
Purple Sandwort	Arenária purpúrea .	9 10	2 3
Creeping Mallow	Málva Caroliniána .	9 10	12 1
Chickweed	Stellária média . . .	9 10	9 10

* Opens in the morning. † Shuts from noon to night.

Baron Humboldt has remarked, that in Tropical countries various objects of nature announce the hour of the day far more plainly than they do in our climates. Not merely do leaves and flowers expand at more regular times, but the insect world presents to the observer a means of telling the hour both of day and night. Trains of those insects, which by their sting destroy the comforts of a residence in hot climates, have their regular periods of appearance and retirement, and are succeeded alternately by other trains, which are, by the American Indians, called respectively, sunrise, twilight, and nocturnal insects.

CHAPTER VIII.

MYRTLE—MYRTLE IN ENGLAND: AT CAPE OF GOOD HOPE:
IN MADEIRA—FLOWERS OF MADEIRA—MYRTLES ON
MOUNTAINS—JEW'S MYRTLE—USE OF MYRTLE AT
FEAST OF TABERNACLES—MYRTLE OF JUDEA—SCENT
OF MYRTLE—ANECDOTE OF ASTRINGENT PROPERTY
OF MYRTLE—FRAGRANT ESSENCES—REGARD OF THE
ANCIENTS FOR MYRTLE—MYRTLE WREATHS—USES OF
MYRTLE AMONG THE SWISS—ALLSPICE TREE—CLOVE
TREE.

And myrtle blooming on the sea-beat shore.

Sotheby's Virgil.

IT is in Africa, or in the land of the East, the
clime of the sun, or beneath the ever blue and
smiling skies of southern Europe, that we must
look for the myrtle hedges, so beautiful, so fra-
grant, and so often the theme both of ancient
and modern poetry. In our own less congenial
and continually varying climate, the odour of
the myrtle, sweet though it be, is not very

powerful, and the favoured spots are few, where the shrub is so plentiful or so luxuriant, as to present anything like the groves of which the poets sing. Indeed the myrtle in most parts of England requires during winter the protection of the greenhouse, though there are some sheltered places where it will bear exposure. In Cornwall and Devonshire it well endures the winter, and grows around the garden bower, or against the wall of many a dwelling.

“ Sacred to Venus is the myrtle shade.”

“The shrub consecrated to love,” says a French traveller, “forms in Candia, hedges, thickets, etc., and is so common that it might almost be considered as the brambles of the country. Among the most striking ornaments of the gardens of the Cape of Good Hope are the myrtle hedges, which grow to a great height around every enclosure; “their blooming beauties waving over the head of the passenger; they unite their fragrance with the odoriferous exhalations, from the orange and lemon trees,

so abundant in that clime." Sometimes these luxuriant hedges extend for one or two miles, separating gardens, orchards, and other cultivated grounds.

In the Madeira isles the myrtle is very abundant, and grows to a considerable height. It is also found there at as great an elevation as 3000 feet above the level of the sea. It was seen formerly still more profusely covering the mountains of Madeira; but it has been cut down in large quantities by the Portuguese, to assist in adorning the churches on the festivals of the saints, or to be borne in those processions so frequent in Catholic countries.

The profusion of this shrub contributes greatly to the picturesque beauty of these renowned isles, where (as Mrs. Bowdich tells us) the flowers and fruits are so varied that one may see "the bright blue sky through the delicate pinnated leaves of the mimosa, while the wood strawberry at its feet recalls the still dearer recollections of home," or partake either of the apple of Europe, or the tree of the Tropics—the grateful Banana.

In Australia the myrtle rears its ponderous trunk a hundred feet high before it expands into its umbrageous canopy of foliage.

It is among valleys formed by the ridges of elevated mountains that the myrtle attains its greatest perfection; and so often is it found shading the calm and peaceful vales which lie among the "eternal hills," "that," says a modern traveller, "it naturally becomes associated in the mind with all that is lovely and peaceful. It offered a chosen emblem of peace and quietude, and gave a living freshness to the annunciation of the angel mentioned by Zachariah, who said, as he stood among the myrtle trees, 'we have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold all the earth sitteth still and is at rest.'"

The Portuguese consider the wood of the myrtle the hardest which grows. That it was formerly valued for this quality, and used for warlike instruments, we know from Virgil,

"The war from stubborn myrtle shafts receives."

The white blossoms of this plant, with their numerous and conspicuous stamens surrounding the centre, are very pretty; but even when no bloom is on them, the myrtles are always beautiful. Their foliage is of so deep and soft a green, and has so polished a surface, that when they stand in the sunshine reflecting the rays, they may remind us of what Professor Wilson said of some other plants, that "they are shrubs, whose leaves of light have no need of flowers."

Several species of Myrtle, all natives of warm climates, have been cultivated in England. The common myrtle (*Myrtus communis*) is known to every one; it is the myrtle of Palestine—the myrtle of the Scriptures, and has several varieties. One variety, the broad-leaved Jew's myrtle (as it is generally called), on which the leaves grow in threes at each joint, is in much request among the Jews. It is interesting to remark, that though far from the land of their fathers, and nationally degraded, this ancient people still retain many of the ceremonies prescribed in other times, and under other circum-

stances; and yearly do the Jews keep the Feast of the Tabernacles, by gathering "the boughs of goodly trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and the willow of the brook." Still do they, as far as may be, conform to the command of the prophet, who exhorted them, when about to celebrate this annual festival, to "go forth into the mount and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths as it is written." The myrtle to which Nehemiah referred, is the common myrtle, and was then, and still is, very abundant in Judea. The Jewish people attach some particular veneration to this broad-leaved variety of it, and are anxious to procure it on this and similar occasions. This kind is therefore cultivated for their especial use, by nurserymen who supply the London market, and it can often be procured only at a great expense.

The name of the myrtle is derived from a Greek word signifying perfume. The volatile oil, which exists in glands in the bark and

leaves of this plant, is the cause of its sweet odour. It is thought to have considerable effect in improving the hair, and is therefore a frequent ingredient in the pomade employed for this purpose. The whole plant has a singularly astringent property, and this is peculiarly partaken by the oil. An amusing anecdote, taken from the "Dictionnaire Portatif d'Histoire Naturelle," may serve to prove its astringent nature. A gentleman who was accidentally left alone in the boudoir of a lady, employed himself in examining the contents of several vases, which were scattered about the room. Not being altogether destitute of that failing so generally attributed to the female sex, he placed himself before a glass, and endeavoured to improve the beauty of his lips, by putting upon them some pomade containing myrtle oil. He was interrupted in the operation by the unexpected entrance of the lady, whom he was awaiting; and the youth upon attempting to address her, found his lips completely closed by the adhesive property of the pomade. A

sudden glance at the open vase in which it was contained, explained to the lady the cause of his dilemma, and produced a burst of laughter at his expense, which, if it had not the effect of curing his vanity, would at least render him more cautious in its indulgence.

The fragrant essences of different kinds which are prepared by the perfumer, are the volatile oils of plants, and are extracted either by the process of expression, or by that of distillation. The aroma which delights us far more than the perfume which we purchase—that odour of spicy shrub or flower which is borne upon the gale, or crushed out from the plants at our feet, is the more evaporable part of their volatile oils, escaping from their reservoirs in the blossom, leaves, or bark. Every plant which delights us by its fragrance, which contributes its sweetness to the breath of morning or evening, has a peculiar volatile oil.

The myrtle is a very favourite plant of eastern countries. Mr. Lane mentions that, in the esteem of the Arabs, it rivals the violet.

Their tradition is that "Adam fell down from Paradise with three things: the myrtle, which is the chief of sweet-scented flowers in this world; an ear of wheat, which is the chief of all kinds of food in this world; and pressed dates, which are the chief of the fruits of this world."

The particular attention given to odorous shrubs by the ancients, rendered the myrtle an object of great regard among them. They dedicated it to Venus, either because it often grows near the sea, whence she is said to have arisen, or because the sweet and unfading nature of its foliage might seem to render it a suitable tribute to the goddess of beauty. The richer climate of Greece strengthens the perfumes of plants, and the groves so renowned in song were planted so that he who wandered among them was greeted by a succession of odours from shrubs so arranged as to diffuse it abundantly; and when the light shower was succeeded by the rainbow, and earth sent up in her freshness the richest perfume, then they imagined that the

influence of the bow upon leaf and flower had called forth the fragrance, and sung of its wonder-working power upon vegetation.

On the first of April, the Roman ladies were accustomed to bathe beneath the myrtle trees, and crowned with its leaves, to proceed thence to the shrine of Venus and offer sacrifice.

Steeped in their wine, the ancients believed that the myrtle bough improved its flavour, and added to its invigorating property; it was therefore regarded by them as an emblem of festivity. The invalid too hoped for restoration to health by using the berries as a medicine, and the magistrate of Athens wore it about his head as a symbol of office.

The magisterial wreaths were composed by some of those artists whose profession it was to form garlands, and to construct letters, the flowers of which should be symbolical of different ideas. The meaning of these wreaths or epistles was as fully understood by the great body of the people, as the language of flowers is recognised in the Eastern harem. The wild

olive, or the wreath of laurel or parsley, which crowned the brow of the successful combatant, appealed to the imagination of his countrymen, and was deemed by the Grecian hero as a well-understood token of applause. It was with the desire of giving to the dead that which they had loved in life, that the ancients crowned the corpse with myrtle. The practice was long continued, till the fathers of the church at length forbade it, because it was taken from heathen people; but so old and pleasing a custom—one which expressed so well the feelings of the mourner—was not easily done away, and the remains of it reached, in our own land, even down to the present century, when the dead were entwined with flowers, or a chaplet hung up in the church or laid upon the tomb.

We learn, from Evelyn, that myrtles were introduced into England long before the invention of greenhouses. It is, however, supposed that our forefathers had some means of sheltering them from the cold, which was apparently more severe in the winter of past years than at present.

Few people make greater use of the myrtle in modern times than do the Swiss. They dye their cloth with its berries, and use them as an ingredient in tanning. They improve their brandy with some admixture of its fruit; and when winter comes down upon the mountains, and renders the hearth the meeting-place of friends and families, then the trunks and stems of the myrtle make excellent firewood, and its bright blaze is reflected on the happy faces of many a peasant's fireside.

The myrtle belongs to the natural order myrtaceæ, which contains some other plants besides those strictly termed myrtles, though all very similar in appearance. They have all dotted leaves, and contain a fragrant oil. Their blossoms—the joy of plants, as Pliny terms them—are all beautiful. They contain numerous stamens, arranged in circular rows around the pistil or central column of the flower. Their flowers are usually white or red.

To this order belong the pomegranate, with its rich red blossoms and glossy green leaves,

and the luscious guava of the Indies. The allspice is the berry of a shrub formerly called myrtle (*Myrtus piménto*), but it now bears the latter name only, and is not considered a myrtle: this tree is a native of Jamaica. To this belong also the Eucalyptus, or gum-tree, of Australia, which is among the loftiest timber trees of the forests of that country, and the aromatic clove (*Caryophyllus*), every part of which possesses considerable fragrance, while its fruit is considered one of the hottest of aromatic substances.

CHAPTER IX.

PASSION - FLOWER — SOLITUDE — WOODS OF AMERICA —
NATIVE REGIONS OF PASSION - FLOWER — FRUITS OF
PASSION-FLOWER—GRANADILLA—ORIGIN OF THE NAME
OF PASSION-FLOWER—REVERENCE PAID TO THIS FLOWER
ON SOME PARTS OF THE CONTINENT.

And the faint passion-flower, the sad and holy,
Tells of diviner hopes. *Mrs. Hemans.*

To those who are not fond of the wild scenes of nature, it may seem strange that Audubon should have chosen to dwell among the woods, to watch the birds, to listen to their notes, and mark their rising and retiring and various habits. Yet he lived among these free creatures of air till he regarded them with so strong a sympathy, that he imagined them possessed of feelings such as actuate the human bosom, and thought, as he lingered among the vast soli-

tudes, that the voices which interrupted the deep stillness, were the morning or evening prayers of the fowls of the wilderness to their Maker. Strange, too, will some deem it, that Waterton should leave behind the joys of home and country, and spend years among the forests of the West, marking each living thing with a curious eye, or gazing with delight on the magnificent coronals of flowers which hang about the lofty trees, till nature seemed his best companion, and he scarcely cared to return to the busy haunts of man. But to many an enthusiastic lover of nature, the shady woods of our own land have a charm beyond the most smiling and fertile scenery, and the accounts of the stern forests of the western hemisphere create an intense wish to roam amid their gloomy grandeur: like the lofty aisles of old cathedrals, they seem to speak of other days; for ages must have come and gone since the stately trees first sprung from the earth, — and their shadowy arches recal the period when the hapless Indian sought, in these recesses, a shelter from the cruelty of the Spaniard.

There are times, too, to every human heart, when solitude is welcome, and human sympathy can for awhile be dispensed with; and then, to wander in the quiet and shady wood,—to commune with God alone amidst the glory of his works,—this is to experience the fulfilment of the wish of the Psalmist, when the aspirations of his weary spirit were,—“O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest: Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.”

Hanging in beautiful festoons about the venerable trees of the American forests, the various kinds of passion-flower form an object of splendour which arrests the attention of the traveller. In this, their native soil, they are far larger than in our country, and very fragrant, and their large starry blossoms hang down in profusion among the branches, or clasp, by their strong tendrils, about the immense trunks of the trees. Of the most brilliant colours—blue, red, white, or purple—they contrast with their dark green leaves, and rival the other blossoms of forests, the beauty of whose floral ornaments is

the greatest in the world. Many of the flowers which bloom there, almost unseen, are far beyond the reach of the traveller, and are known to us but by a very general and imperfect description; for, twining their leaves and stems together, it is impossible for the observer to regard them with any degree of accuracy.

Of these immense forests of South America, Baron Humboldt has observed,—“It might be said that the earth, overloaded with plants, does not allow them space enough to unfold themselves. The trunks of the trees are everywhere concealed under a thick carpet of verdure; and if we carefully transplanted the orchideæ, the pipers, and the pothos which a single American fig-tree nourishes, we should cover a vast extent of ground. The same lianas (or vines) which creep on the ground, reach the tops of the trees, and pass from one to another, at the height of more than a hundred feet. Thus by a continual interlacing of parasitic plants, the botanist is often led to confound the flowers, the fruits, and leaves which belong to different species.

“We walked for some hours under the shade of these arcades, that scarcely admit a glimpse of the sky, which appeared to me of an indigo blue, so much the deeper, as the green of the equinoctial plants is generally of a stronger hue, with somewhat of a brownish tint.”

A considerable degree of moisture in the atmosphere, joined to a high temperature, seem the necessary conditions of the excessive growth of vegetation exhibited by these forests, and especially for the height of their trees. It is very seldom that our tallest tree — the patriarch of an English woodland — attains a greater height than a hundred and twenty feet, while in the American forests many of the trees are a hundred and fifty feet high.

Upwards of forty species of passion-flower (*Passiflora*) have been brought into this country. Some of them will produce their fruits in the conservatory, others will only blossom there, but several species will thrive out of doors, and ornament our verandahs with their flowers, or even deck the fronts of houses in the squares of

London. They are all climbing plants, hanging by their tendrils or their twisted leaf-stalks. They are very abundant in South America and the West Indies; one or two species grow wild in North America, a few are found in Eastern India, and many gladden various parts of Africa and the islands near it.

These flowers are of a very ephemeral character; they bloom one day only, opening at about eleven or twelve o'clock, and closing in the evening. On the next day they may be seen hanging, brown and withered, upon the stem which bore them. Some of them burst into expansion with great elasticity.

Several species of passion-flower are powerfully odoriferous, and most of them emit a faint and delicate perfume. The berries which they produce are, in some instances, so large, and contain so great a quantity of pulpy acidulated substance, as to form a fruit for the dessert, which is in great request for its delicious flavour, and the refreshment it affords in the warm climates in which it is indigenous.

The sweet calabash of the West Indies is the fruit of a passion-flower (*Passiflora malifórmis*). The fruit has a most beautiful appearance in its native woods, and it has been in a few instances produced in England. It is round, about the size of an apple, with a smooth, but very thick rind, and has a great number of black seeds among its yellow pulp. The flowers of this species are delightfully fragrant, and of a reddish colour. The fruit of this kind, as well as that of four others, is sometimes called the granadilla, or little pomegranate. Some of the other granadilla vines bear large oval fruits, of a rich violet colour, much resembling in appearance that of the purple egg plant, and highly aromatic in flavour.

Another species of passion-flower bears a berry the size of an olive, which, as well as the flowers, is much used in Jamaica to form a syrup, valued by the West Indians.

The thread-like coloured stamens which surround the flower-like rays, and some other portions of this delicately constructed blossom,

attracted the notice of the Spaniards in their conquest of America, and induced them to give it the name of passion-flower. To their enthusiastic imaginations, the different parts of the blossoms figured the number of the Apostles, the rays of glory, the nails, the hammer—those sad signs of the Saviour's passion! and the sight of this wondrous symbol in the far-off wilderness, was to them an assurance of conquests which were to be effected under the name of religion. More anxious to promote their own peculiar doctrines of faith, and to ensure a temporal dominion, than to exemplify the spirit of Him whom they professed to follow, the very men who beheld in a flower of the forest an emblem of love—an emblem for faith to rest upon—carried misery wherever they raised their standard.

It requires some imagination to see, in the passion-flower, a symbol of the subject it is thought to represent; but it is still, in some Catholic countries, regarded with great veneration and affection, and considered a marvel-

lous confirmation of the scriptural doctrine of the Atonement.

The passion-flower gives its name to the natural order Passifloreæ, which contains but few other plants, and none of them natives of Britain.

CHAPTER X.

SWEET-PEA — TENDRILS — MORNING AFTER A SUMMER
STORM — NATIVE COUNTRIES OF SWEET-PEA — EVER-
LASTING PEA — WILD YELLOW VETCHLING — BEAUTY OF
STREAMS IN THE COUNTRY — CHICKLING VETCH —
TUBEROUS-ROOTED PEA — USE OF ITS TUBERS IN HOL-
LAND — LEGUMINOUS PLANTS — BROOM — LABURNUM —
FIELD BEAN — MELILOT-TREFOILS — CORAL TREE —
DECANNEE BEAN — MIMOSA — JUDAS TREE — MOVING
SAINTPOIN — VALUE OF LEGUMINOUS PLANTS — VERSES
ON WILD FLOWERS.

Few self-supported flowers endure the wind
Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid
Of the smooth-shaven prop, and neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age
For interest sake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused
And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
Like virtue thriving most where little seen :
Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
Else unadorned, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
The strength they borrow, with the grace they lend.

Cowper.

EVERY one is disposed to acknowledge that
circular or spiral lines are more pleasing to the

eye than straight or angular ones. Philosophers may not coincide as to the degree of influence exerted over our tastes by associations already formed in our minds respecting them, but the fact is indisputable. The tendril upon plants, that graceful spiral shoot, by which the weak cling to the strong, affords a pleasing illustration of Hogarth's line of beauty, and is beautiful, even to those who, in their observations, recognise no science, but judge simply by their uninstructed senses.

Many weak plants are provided with tendrils, by whose means they attain to great height, or are enabled to resist the winds. The tendril or clasper (called by botanists *cirrus*,) is at first a straight thread-like shoot, which afterwards assumes a spiral form, and clinging to some other object, becomes gradually firmer in its texture. That its mode of growth gives this prop additional strength, is evident from the fact that the tendril of a plant is much stronger than a straight branch of equal size. On some tendrils other shoots put forth, forming a com-

pound tendrils, and giving the plant to which they belong a still further means of support.

Tendrils are usually found on the stems of a climbing plant, but there are instances in which they grow at the end of each leaf; and in one singular genus (*Stróphànthus*), the points of the bright yellow petals (or divisions of the coloured part of the flower) become tendrils, and twine about the branches of neighbouring plants.

Many plants, besides possessing tendrils, have a stem and leaf-stalks, which grow in a spiral slope, when the plant requires the support of another. Thus the traveller's joy, or wild clematis, that beautiful ornament of our summer hedges, by its stems, as well as tendrils, so clings to the bushes, that it is impossible to sever a large portion without tearing it. The large white clusters of flowers, and the numerous dark leaves, seeming to belong to the brambles among which they entwine, so closely are they interlaced by the convolutions of their stems.

When a plant which needs the assistance of

claspers, is situated at some distance from a wall or tree, its tendrils form on that side of it which is nearest that object; a provision which is remarkably adapted to the need of the weaker vegetable.

It is a bright sunshiny morning in June. The earth seemed yesterday covered with leaves and flowers, and the garden was full of them. Sweet-williams in all their glory; honeysuckles twining about the bushes, and clothing them with their fairy trumpets; lychnises, too bright for the eye to look upon; roses, lilies, irises, rhododendrons, and a hundred others, blooming all as if they were so vigorous, as well as beautiful, that they were not destined to remind us of fragility and change. "All that's bright must fade," has been sung over many a withered flower, once of sweet promise, and been sighed by many a mourner over some monument of human decay, and long as earth shall last its truth must be echoed even by the most hopeful of us all. The rain has fallen during night, and with the wind, beaten upon the heads of

the flowers, and the lilies are snapped, and the tuberoses lie soiled upon the ground, and some summer's days must elapse before the garden will resume its wonted loveliness. But amidst the devastation of the flower-beds, the sweet pea is still throwing its vigorous stems with twin leaflets and its winged clusters over the arbutus, and clinging with such tenacity, that the storm has not riven it, and budding in such profusion among the dark leaves and branches of the tree, and so greeting the passer-by with its odours, that even he who was little charmed with flowers, might pause to admire it, and think perhaps, that the arbutus was the parent of its delicate butterfly-shaped blossoms.

The sweet pea (*Láthyrus odorátus*) finds admission into almost every garden, and flings its flexile branches over the shrubs, or clasps the sticks placed on the beds by the gardener for climbing plants. It is valued everywhere for its light and airy form, and for its sweet odour. It grows wild in the south of Europe, and in Sicily, that land of sunny skies and flowering

turfs, it is very abundant. It was introduced from that island into England many years since.

Another species of pea, generally called the everlasting broad-leaved pea (*Láthyrus latifólius*) has, during late years, become no less common than the sweet pea, and makes a handsome ornament for the trellis-work of a verandah, intermingling with the scented clematis or the jessamine. Those who delight in a summer arbour, often avail themselves of its showy and abundant blossoms, which fade less quickly than do those of many other plants. But it is still more often seen with the honeysuckle growing against the whitewashed wall of the cottage, or over its garden palings, yielding its pods in great abundance, and covering perchance a happy home with its bright garlands. Sometimes it grows wild in quarries and woods, but this occurs rarely, and most botanists think it is not a native of Britain.

But besides the garden peas we have several very pretty wild species in meadows and other rural places. One little yellow-flowered pea

(*Láthyrus praténsis*) is very common on pasture lands, especially if the soil be moist. Its stems are two or three feet long, and it may often be seen tangling the lower branches of the thicket which borders those delightful little brooks, that, like a line of silver, meander along the pathway of our rural walk. Beautiful they are! stealing by noiselessly, yet diffusing freshness wherever they wander: like the voice of kindness, unheard by the many, yet gladdening those immediately under its influence. Now and then sweeping through the sedges, they rustle so gently as to invite us to listen to their soft music; or they display the smooth pebbles so plainly, through their pellucid waters, as almost to tempt us to linger and drink of the brook by the way.

I know a stream, a gentle stream,
Which by a valley glides along,
That well might suit a poet's theme,
Or fit a raptured minstrel's song;
And often I have stood to look
On the calm beauty of that brook,

And thought the scene was such as might
Have shone upon Creation's morn,
When all the morning-stars of light,
Sang joyously that earth was born ;
And angels as they paused to see,
Joined the triumphant jubilee ;
And God himself in glory stood,
And there pronounced it very good !

Cattle are very fond of this meadow pea or vetchling, and resort to the streams, not only to drink the water but to feed on the plant, which often flourishes plentifully about their margin, or to lie lazily crouched on the greensward beside the stream.

Another species, the yellow vetchling (*Láthyrus apháca*), is very similar to the last, but more rare, and if its seeds be eaten they produce headach. The seeds of all the vetchlings are very abundant in dry seasons, and country children often gather them, calling them mouse peas.

The chickling vetch of Italy and the south of Europe (*Láthyrus satívus*), is sometimes planted as a garden flower. It is cultivated on some

parts of the continent for the sake of its seeds, from which a light and palatable bread is made. This food has however been found to have had so bad an effect on the health of those who eat it, that the subjects of the Duke of Wirtemberg were, about two centuries since, prohibited by law from planting it. When the flour procured from the seeds is mixed with an equal quantity of wheat flour, the bread is not deleterious; but its effect, when eaten alone, of softening the bones, and producing rigidity in the muscles of the human frame, has made its culture less frequent than it formerly was. A well-known species of garden pea, the tuberous-rooted kind, (*Lathyrus tuberósus*), forms tubers on its roots, which in Holland are sold as an article of food, and are much valued for their flavour.

The pea flower belongs to the leguminous order of plants, which, as it is characterised by marks that are obvious to the unscientific observer, may be the subject of a more particular description than can be usually given in a work intended for general readers.

The leguminous order (*Leguminosæ*) may be generally known by its papilionaceous or butterfly-shaped flowers, blossoms of this form being found in no other order of plants. In the absence of flowers of this shape, its pinnated leaves and its pods distinguish it. There are a very few instances, and these consisting of exotic plants, which have not these marks of distinction. The pinnate leaf consists of a number of leaflets placed opposite each other, on a leaf-stalk, as in the garden acacia.

Every one will immediately remember examples of this order. The bonnie broom (*Genista*) which gave its name to the family of the Plantagenets, and the bright yellow flowers of which perfume the heaths and clothe them with lustre. The laburnum (*Cytisus*), often called golden blossoms by country people; a tree dear to the child at school, because its pendent clusters unfold just before the Midsummer vacation, and whose opening buds have erewhile made the young hearts within us beat with joy and hope. The field bean (*Vicia*) which, when

in full flower, by its sweet scent reminds us, perhaps more than any of our native odours can do, of the fragrant breath of Eastern gales. The winds as they play above the bean field, bear to us at times a sweetness almost overpowering, and far stronger than that breathed from the bed of roses. These with the lupins, and many more, belong to the leguminous family.

But let us walk away into the meadows, and there we may find these plants in abundance. Blue and lilac vetches creep in winged clusters over the hedges, and the yellow flower of the melilot springs up beneath them. This flower, which was formerly called golden saxifrage, yields, when dried, a delightful fragrance, but is scentless while growing. It blooms in June, and is about two or three feet high. Its scent is far more powerful in Switzerland, and the plant is much used in the Swiss dairy to prevent, by its powerful odour, the decay of the cheese. The little pea-shaped ladies-slipper springs among the grass, and the rich clovers,

from the minute yellow trefoil to the large purple and white kinds, mingle their fragrance. The clovers or trefoils, as they are called, because their leaves are all composed of three leaflets, are very valuable on pasture lands. They were formerly called three-leaved grasses, and village people often term them the husbandman's barometer. When the atmosphere is damp, their leaflets close together; and no sooner are the dews of evening upon the clover field, than the leaflets fold up; as Hurdis writes,

“ What time the sun has from the west withdrawn,
The various hues that graced his cloudy fall,—
—————, the recent leaf
Of clover 'gins to sleep, and white with dew,
Closes its tender triple-fingered palm,
Till morning dawn afresh.”

As the clusters which form the head of the clover are composed of many florets, we do not discover, until we separate them, that the blossoms are papilionaceous; but it is owing to this form that they are so easily dispersed. They have besides little pods for seed-vessels, which

would confirm the fact of their being leguminous plants. The common white or Dutch trefoil (*Trifólium répens*) is the Irishman's shamrock. It was in high repute among the Druids, either as a charm against evil spirits, or for some supposed medicinal virtue. The legends of Ireland tell how St. Patrick explained the doctrine of the Trinity by its triple leaflets to the Pagan Irish, till they became his converts. Some years ago the white clover was cultivated in small patches about Edinburgh, in order that the Irishmen who went thither to the University might have a piece of shamrock to dress their hats on the day of their patron saint. The ancients represented Hope by a little child standing on tiptoe, and holding a trefoil in his hand.

Some of the trefoils, besides those commonly called clover, are very pretty. There is one species, called the strawberry-headed trefoil, which immediately reminds us of the fruit from which it is named; and several downy-looking trefoil flowers grow in the meadows.

In former times, when charms were worn by the superstitious to protect them from ghostly intruders, the trefoil was considered among the most potent; but the spirits of old times, which as the poets tell,

“ Had haunts in dale or piny mountain,
Or forest by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
Or chasms, or watery depths,—all these have vanished,
They live no longer in the faith of reason.”

The climate of England is, on account of its moisture, considered less favourable to leguminous plants than that of drier regions. They extend, however, from regions bordering the perpetual snows, increasing in abundance in the temperate and torrid zones. In tropical countries—in those lands so full of gorgeous and beautiful vegetation—this tribe of plants displays its chief beauty. We read of the glowing tints of the coral tree (*Bauhinia*), whose deep red butterfly-shaped flowers crown even the lofty summits of the trees of western woods; and who has not, when lingering over the narrative of the traveller in the deserts of Africa,

participated the joy which he felt when his weary wanderings brought him to a clump of mimosa trees. Glad indeed was he, when his eye had seen nothing for many days but sand and sky, to gaze on the feathery foliage of the mimosa, and the golden threads of its delicate blossoms, and to sit down in its chequered shadow to take his repast, in a spot where none but the wild beast and the fowl of the wilderness have found a home. Alas, how many who have been cheered by the sight of a tree of the desert, have laid them down to die upon the sands which nourished it! One kind of mimosa (*Mimosa sensitiva*), is the sensitive plant of the conservatory. The scarlet blossoms of the Decanee bean (*Butéa superbe*) are described by Forbes, as he saw them in the neighbourhood of Bombay, as "contrasting vividly with their black stalks, and giving so brilliant an effect to the woods, as to appear at sunset like immense forests in a glow of fire."

But I must not omit mentioning the Judas tree, which is a handsome tree of the leguminous

kind, bearing pink flowers on its trunk. Its name is derived from the supposition that the wretched Judas hung himself upon it. If we are to believe the old botanist Gerarde, however, he hung himself upon an elder tree.

To this order belong also the liquorice and the indigo, and that wonderful plant the moving saintfoin (*Hedysárum gyrans*), the leaves of which, without any apparent cause, are in almost perpetual motion.

Linnæus asserted, that not one of all this numerous and universally extended family of plants is poisonous. This assertion has since been found to require some little qualification. The poisonous plants are, however, very rare, while the nutritious are abundant. The scarlet berries, frequently used for necklaces, are the seeds of the *Abrus precatórius*, a leguminous plant; and cases are recorded in which persons have been killed by accidentally puncturing the finger and admitting their juice, while piercing them with a needle. The negroes have so exaggerated an idea of their deleterious properties,

that they say if one half of a seed be eaten by a man it will cause death. The seeds of the laburnum are violently emetic in their nature, and the scent of its blossoms often produces headach. Upon the whole it may be said of the leguminous family of plants, that there is not a more wholesome or serviceable tribe known to man.

WILD FLOWERS.

Why is it that I love the flowers
 That grow in woods, and lanes, and fields,
 Better than all the glowing ones
 The richly cultured garden yields?
 Why is it that the daisy has
 A charm for me, all flowers above;
 Or why the hawthorn's fragrant breath,
 More than the myrtle's do I love?

The cuckoo-flower and hyacinth,
 Those blossoms of each woodland wild,—
 The primrose and anemone,
 O, I have prized them from a child!
 And still the odours that arise
 From clusters of the wild woodbine,
 Are sweeter, lovelier to me,
 Than scent of Eastern jessamine.

And yet the flowers I prize so much,
Than cultured flowers are not more sweet,
And they are withered sooner far,
Than those we in the garden meet ;
Their colours are not half so gay
As tints of flowers from far-off land,
From Isle of Greece, or Indian grove,
Nurtured by man with careful hand.

But meadow flowers bring to my mind
The thoughts of pleasant days gone by,
When with my sisters, hand in hand,
We roamed beneath the summer sky ;
And twined a garland for our hats,
Of blossoms from each bush around,
And linked the daisies into chains,
And culled the cowslips from the ground.

And then I love the field-flowers too,
Because they are a blessing given,
Ev'n to the poorest little one,
That wanders 'neath the vault of heaven.
'The garden-flowers are reared for few,
And to those few belong alone ;
But flowers that spring by vale or stream,
Each one may claim them for his own.

The rich parterre is walled around,
But meadow lands stretch far and wide,
And we may gather lovely flowers,
For miles along the river side ;
And far amidst the landscape wild,
Wander the scenes of beauty o'er,
Now lingering in the violet glen,
Now roaming on the thymy moor.

Or pause, where foam-like meadow queen
Scatters her blossoms on the lake,
Or where the orchis blooms among
The lady-fern or feathery brake ;
Or sit beside the winding path
Bordered by ripening wheat or oat,
When on the gentle summer air
The poppy's crimson banners float.

And O, I joy as Spring comes round,
Flinging her scents o'er glen and hill !
For though I love the garden-flowers,
I love the wild buds better still.
Then let me stray into the fields,
Or seek the green wood's shady bowers,
Marking the beauties and the scents,
Of simple blossoms—sweet wild-flowers.

A. P.

CHAPTER XI.

SNOWDROP—SNOWS OF WINTER—ANCIENT NAME OF
SNOWDROP—SNOWDROP CONSECRATED TO THE VIRGIN
MARY—SNOWFLAKE—GUERNSEY LILY—NARCISSUS—
DAFFODIL—POET'S NARCISSUS.

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost;
I love winds, and waves, and storms,
Every thing almost
That is nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

Shelley.

WE are apt during the latter months of autumn to look back with regret upon the summer which has left us, and to regard the coming winter as a period when the gay scenes of nature shall have departed, and when the face of earth will be sad and gloomy. It is perhaps the desolate and cheerless appearance of natural objects—of fields and gardens—during November, which

thus casts a cloud over our anticipations of winter; for when that season has fairly commenced, we find it in some of its aspects "beautiful exceedingly."

To say nothing of the charms of the domestic circle, of books read by the fireside to cheerful auditors, of the meeting of friends around one hearth, and all the social pleasures which time, with his many innovations, has yet spared to the English Christmas home, the scene exhibited by earth itself, is often of the most magnificent character. The dazzling snow lying smoothly over a long line of hills and valleys beneath them, or drifted here and there into high mounds, is a sight of great beauty. The long icicles or hoar-frost hanging about the dwellings, and bespangling the casements, give to the buildings the appearance of palaces touched by the enchanter's hand, and bid to glitter to the sun. Every blade of grass is crested with diamonds, and the reflection of the clear blue skies upon the snow, lends it a tinge of most delicate lilac. Then the hollow

dirge-like sounds of the winds, as they drive all before them in their fury, and rustle the dead leaves and the broken branches, or tear up the high trees by their roots, so impress the imagination with sublimity, and bear so wild and deep-toned a music withal, that we are compensated for any temporary fears for our own safety which they awaken; and did we not think upon the sailor on the deep, and the weary half-frozen traveller, and the homeless poor; could we forget all but ourselves, we might welcome winter as a season of sublimity, and even be willing that it should last a month longer than its appointed time.

Those who are not aware that white flowers belong as much to regions of ice and snow as to the glowing portions of earth, may wonder to see so frail-looking a flower as the snowdrop

"Come before the swallow dares,
And take the winds of March with beauty."

A lovely flower it is in itself, its simple English name signifying the intense whiteness which it

possesses, and which few other blossoms exhibit to so great a degree. Indeed, when the snow-drop is seen on the country landscape, it may bear comparison with the whitest tint which nature can display. There is no flower whose hue seems equally impaired by the air of a town, for the slightest soil will tarnish its lustre. Like many another lovely thing, an unkindly atmosphere may bid it perish. Lovely it is in its drooping blossom, and unsullied purity! Lovely, too, in its early appearance;—this first-ling of the year is like the feelings of youth, gentle and pure, and heedless of clouds and storms. The French call it *Perce-neige*, because it lifts its head above the snowy ground, while its leaves have their fleecy garment hanging upon them.

In former times, when the Roman Catholic religion prevailed in this country, this little blossom was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It was called the Fair Maid of February, because it usually was in bloom on the second of that month, or Candlemas-day, which was the day

kept in celebration of that on which the Virgin took the Holy Child to the Jewish temple, and there presented an offering. Some old writers call it also the narcissus violet, or the bulbous-rooted violet; but in those days it was not a common flower, and only to be found in choice gardens. Evelyn mentions it as a rare flower, and calls it the snow-flower, or snowdrop.

There are two species of snowdrop in the garden, — the plaited snowdrop (*Galánthus plicátus*), and the common flower (*Galánthus nivalis*). The last is often considered indigenous, as it grows without culture in several parts of the United Kingdom. It is, however, certainly not an old English plant, though now pretty extensively naturalized. It is found sometimes in woods, but chiefly in orchards, into which it may have easily escaped from the garden. Who does not feel pleasure in finding it wild, or in seeing it in the small winter nosegay among the flowers of the laurustinus and the crocus? And who is not willing to say with the poet, to its Maker—

“ Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year,
That on my bosom lies.”

This flower is often in bloom from the month of January until spring has quite taken possession of the land, and casting her flowery garlands over grove and hill, has converted it into one wide-spreading garden. It derives its name (*Galánthus*) from two Greek words signifying milk and a flower.

A small white summer-blooming plant, the snowflake (*Leucójum æstivum*), which often adorns the moist meadows of England, very much resembles the snowdrop. Its chief mark of difference is, that it has several blossoms on its stem, while the snowdrop is single flowered. This plant may be found wild in the meadows about May or June.

There are in gardens three cultivated species of snowflake, which are natives of Germany and other parts of the continent.

The snowdrop is placed by botanists among

a class all somewhat similar in the form of their leaves and manner of growth. The amaryllis gives its name to the order amaryllidæ. The plants comprised in it have all bulbous roots, and are many of them very beautiful, especially those genera brought from the Cape of Good Hope. The Guernsey lily (*Amaryllis sarniënsis*), though brought from Japan by a vessel, and cast upon the shore of that island, has found there and in Jersey a very favourable reception. It does not, however, flower there so freely as on its native soil. "In Guernsey," says Dr. Macculloch, "every gardener and almost every petty farmer who has a bit of garden ground, appropriates a patch to this favoured root; and the few hundreds of flowers which are brought to England in the season, or which are kept for ornament in the island, are the produce of thousands of roots. The average rate of flowering is about fifteen or eighteen in a hundred.

The narcissus is another plant of this order, and is highly esteemed in the East. Its scent is, however, generally considered very unwhole-

some, and the ancients devoted it to the Furies, who were said to torment their sufferers by its stupifying powers. Three species of this flower grow wild. Among these is the daffodil, or Lent lily. In some parts of England this flower is commonly wild, but in many it is found only in gardens. Sometimes on the borders of rivulets in the country one may see, among other riverside flowers, the "daffodillies fill their cups with tears," and sometimes one meets with a patch of its strongly-scented blossoms in the meadow. The Turks call it golden bowl. Herrick has beautifully apostrophised it:

" We have short time to stay as you,
 We have as short a spring,
 As quick a growth to meet decay
 As you or any thing :
 We die
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away,
 Like to the summer rain,
 Or, as the pearls of morning dew,
 Ne'er to be found again."

The poet's narcissus (*Narcissus poetica*) is

the white flower, with a narrow red rim round the nectary, which we often see in the spring flower-bed. It deserves cultivation, for its beauty justifies its name. It grows wild in some parts of England, but is not very common. Several of the amaryllidæ are ornaments of the conservatory, and display the most brilliant colours.

CHAPTER XII.

CROCUS—ASPECT OF GARDEN DURING WINTER—GARDEN
CROCUS—MEADOW CROCUS—CROCUS IN GREECE—IN
SAFFRON-WALDEN—USES OF SAFFRON IN THE EAST—
YELLOW DYE OF SEVERAL PLANTS—MODE OF SELLING
SAFFRON IN GREECE—YELLOW IRIS—"SWETE CLOTHE"
OF THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH.

Like lilac-flame its colour glows,
Tender and yet so clearly bright,
That all for miles and miles about
The splendid meadow shineth out,
And far-off village children shout
To see the welcome sight.

Mrs. Howitt.

THE several spring-blooming species of garden crocus derive less of their attraction from their purple or golden colours, than from their early appearance. They spring up from the earth when as yet its surface is but little variegated by the numerous flowers of later

months. The garden crocuses, indeed, appear much less beautiful than the wild kind, for the former are often planted upon the bed in formal rows, or enclosed by the little hedge of box, while the latter grow in tufts in various parts of the meadow—the free wild children of earth. Still, under all circumstances, the crocus is a handsome flower, and contrasts beautifully with its companion, the delicate snowdrop. Then, too, it enlivens the barren aspect of the garden, which has long looked desolate and dreary; so that we hail the crocus as a favourite, and it mingles with all our dreams of spring, as assuredly as the cherished violet or meadow daisy. It is, indeed, as much the precursor of this season as its accompaniment, as it blooms both in February and March; and when it first gilds the bed, we know that spring is coming quickly. It is like the early beam of the morning sun—a promise of a rich noontide glow. We are glad, when the rain will cease awhile, and when the thaw is not dropping from the trees, to wrap our warm

clothing about us, and venture forth into the garden to watch the first crocuses, and to predict the beauty with which the earth shall be soon covered.

Perhaps there is not, throughout the year, a more undelightful month than February. It is that in which nature presents her fewest beauties. We observe this especially in the flower gardens. Indeed the grass is getting green upon the meadow, and under the hedges several plants are putting forth their herbage—their delicate green leaves and stems. The woods are always lovely, even in winter, with their black and red berries, and the varied outlines presented by the naked boughs of the differently formed trees, and the pathways dry from the carpet of brown leaves which the angry winds have flung over them. The beautiful snow has melted away from the flower-beds, and here and there the leaves of the early plants may be seen unfolding themselves; but the large uncovered spaces of the parterre, adorned by scarcely any other blossom, seem, notwithstanding the open

cups of its knots of crocuses, a barren dreary spot.

There are generally enumerated fourteen species of garden crocus; either of blue, in its varied shades, from the full purple to the azure tint, or of the most brilliant yellow. They are almost all natives of warm climates, though with the exception of the autumn species, they bloom with us during February and March.

The autumn-blooming crocuses, though not inferior in beauty to those of spring, are, of course, from the season of their blossoming, less generally admired, but one of these species (the *Crocus sativus*,) is valuable for its production of saffron.

But it is in the few spots of English meadow land where this flower is found, that it is invested with all its loveliness. There it rises among the shining blades of grass, or grows beneath the welcome plants which, at the beginning of the year, grace the hedges, adding greatly by their numerous small white blossoms to the beauty of the vernal landscape. The

wild crocus is more frequently of a yellow than any other colour; but the fields of purple crocuses (*Crócus nudiflórus*) are those alluded to in the verse placed at the head of the chapter. It is the same species as that which grows on the Alps, and at Friuli it is very abundant, and grows quite near the sea. It is plentiful in the neighbourhood of Nottingham, and may be found occasionally in several parts of England; but it is in the vicinity of that town that it is seen to most advantage. There the lands which it adorns are like radiant spots, compared with which the other meadows seem almost colourless. Its full-blown cups stand open to invite the spring butterfly to his regale, or the diligent bee to add to the store which he is gathering for others. Not one little upland or dell of these meadows but is covered with the daisy and the crocus. Every hedge violet that there expands, seems of a darker hue by its contrast; and never does cowslip or primrose better merit its long worn epithet of pale, than when either the sunny or blue crocus stands beside it.

In Greece the same floral beauty is very frequent, covering the sides of the mountains with one sheet of blue or gold. In the few British scenes which it enriches, it is probably not truly wild, but having been cast from some garden, and found a soil peculiarly favourable to it, has flourished and extended itself around the spot on which it first took root.

Four species of crocus have been thus naturalized, and the saffron crocus is cultivated in fields. It is planted in the suburbs of Saffron-Walden, in Cambridgeshire, having given its name to this town, from its culture in the neighbourhood, as early as the reign of Edward III.

Saffron was formerly more highly esteemed and applied to more purposes than at present. It was once a considerable object of culture in various parts of England, particularly in the counties of Hereford and Suffolk. It is made of the stamens of the crocus, which require to be gathered early in the day, while the sun's rays are powerful. The people employed in procuring it gather the flower in baskets, and

carrying it to their homes, pick out the threads which are in the centre of the blossom, and which are the only useful part, the bright petals being thrown away. The stamens are then dried in a kiln, and pressed into cakes, when the saffron is ready for commercial purposes.

The use of saffron as a medicine has been greatly superseded by the late discoveries of physicians, and its chief use now is in dying and confectionery. To this latter use it has been put for many years; for the clown in the *Winter's Tale*, when enumerating the articles he has to sell, does not forget to mention the "saffron to colour the warden-pies." From the gradual diminution, during late years, of the use of this drug, it is not thought worth while to cultivate the saffron crocus to any extent in England; it is therefore often imported from France and Spain, though the native produce is considered superior to that derived from foreign sources. When saffron was at first generally used throughout Europe, as a medicine, it was entirely brought from the Levant; but the

method of cultivating the crocus, and the means of making it serviceable, soon became known to the English.

Among the nations of the East, the crocus is still gathered in large quantities, and made into saffron. This is in high repute as a cordial and restorative medicine, and among a people delighting in perfumes, it is valued as an agreeable aromatic. Letters of invitation to the magnificent nuptial, or other entertainments, in which the rich Orientals delight, are written upon paper flowered with gold and sprinkled with saffron. A beautiful yellow extract is very generally obtained from it throughout the East, and used for the purpose of dying.

Garments dyed in saffron are apt to fade upon exposure to the sun, so that many other plants are used now for dying, the yellow extract being procurable from a great number of vegetables. The dyer's weed, or wild mignonette, is cultivated in France for the use of manufacturers; and the yellow berried buckthorn of the south of Europe, the black or dyer's oak of the

American forest, the timber of the West-Indian mulberry tree, with a large number of other vegetable dyes, have almost superseded the use of saffron in England.

The abundance of wild crocus in some of the islands of the Greek Archipelago is very great. It colours the landscape for many miles, and gives a hue of beauty to the mountain sides. The procuring the flower and making it into cakes, is an employment of the villagers, and to the poor the preparation and sale of the saffron is a very important business.

One singular practice of the Greeks is recorded by travellers in these islands, which shews how little accustomed their inhabitants are to the calculations necessary for successful commerce. The saffron is sold by the weight of a hen's egg. It is not material to them whether the egg be large or small, provided its size is not very considerably above or below that of eggs in general. Neither is any regard paid to the circumstance of its freshness, although it is well known that an egg which has been long

kept, is considerably heavier than one newly laid. Enough it is to the Greek peasant to see his saffron cake fairly weighed in the scale against an egg, and he makes no farther stipulations in his bargain.

Mr. Madder says, that although the Oriental crocus is the same as that cultivated in England, it possesses a far greater degree of vigour in the East than in this country.

According to some authors the crocus derives its name from a Greek word signifying thread, from the thread or filament used for saffron; but the ancient fable is, that it received its name from Crocus, a youth who, being killed, was changed into a flower.

The crocus may be often observed to thrive less in situations where a stream washes the banks of the garden than elsewhere; for the root is so palatable to the water-rat, that he will hunt it out with great diligence, and greedily devour it.

The crocus belongs to the same natural order as the iris (*Irídeæ*), an order containing a great

number of beautiful flowers, but mostly destitute of fragrance. Many of the genera are found in Africa, making even the desert glad by their beauty, and by far the greater number which we possess have been brought from the Cape of Good Hope. A few of this order of plants enliven our native meadows. The yellow iris (*Iris pseud-ácorus*) adds a lustre to the groups of wild flowers which assemble about our rivulets, rendering their margins some of the gayest spots which England can shew. The roots of this iris are powdered, and used for the same purposes as gall-nuts. The root of the *Iris florentina*, a native of the south of Europe, forms the orris root, so often used as a dentifrice. Lyte says of it, "the iris is knowen of the clothworkers and drapers, for with these rootes they use to trimme their clothes to make them sweete and pleasant." This was probably the "swete clothe" so celebrated in the reign of Elizabeth. This root is much used in Russia to flavour a drink sold about the streets, made of honey and ginger.

The word iris is the Egyptian word for eye, and this name, meaning the eye of Heaven, has been given to this genus on account of the varied colours of its handsome flowers.

CHAPTER XIII.

HAWTHORN—MONTH OF MAY—LOVE OF FLOWERS—MAY-DAY—ANCIENT CEREMONIES OF THIS DAY—PINK HAWTHORN—UNIVERSALITY OF HAWTHORN TREE—GLASTONBURY THORN—BEAUTY OF FRUIT BLOSSOMS—ROSE—POTENTILLA—HERB BENNET—FRUITS—MOUNTAIN ASH—MOUNTAIN ASH PLANTED BY DRUIDS—ANCIENT SUPERSTITIONS CONNECTED WITH THE TREE.

Farewell to thee April, a gentle farewell,
Thou hast saved the young rose in its emerald cell ;
Sweet nurse, thou hast mingled thy sunshine and showers,
Like kisses and tears, on thy children the flowers.
As a hope when fulfill'd to sweet memory turns,
We shall think of thy clouds, as the odorous urns
Whence colour and freshness, and fragrance were wept ;
We shall think of thy rainbows, their promise is kept ;
There is not a cloud on the morning's blue way,
And the daylight is waking the first of the May.

L. E. L.

How gladly does the lover of nature welcome
May, with its profusion of leaves and flowers,

and its gay and soft tints, and gentle breezes. Perhaps there is not a human being, by whom, at some period or other, the love of nature has not been felt. We commence life with it. In childhood, the fields, the copses, the flowers, the birds and lambs,—all the features of the country scene, animate and cheer us,—the violet is a treasure, the flowering hawthorn a delight. Too often as we advance in life, compelled to spend our days far away from rural scenes, and no longer daily witnesses of the beauties of nature, this love seems exhausted or forgotten. Yet the small, but carefully tended plot of garden ground, in the midst of the town, where the lilac and laburnum seem stunted for want of free air, and where the white flowers are clouded, while the London-pride and persicaria seem to bid defiance to the smoke; or the myrtles, and geraniums, and mignonette, which smile over some of the dingiest avenues of the city, attest that the love of nature still lingers, though not a green field is in sight, and little can be seen of the blue sky.

“ Ev'n in the stifling bosom of the town
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
That soothe the rich possessor ; much consoled
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the spot
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
That Nature lives ; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.”

It is May, the smiling cheerful May! our fathers did well to greet its coming with flowers. Rare indeed are now these pleasing welcomings, though yet the May-bough is hung over some houses in Hertfordshire, and the May-pole lingers still on the village-green of Wales. The remains of the old practices are however, in most places, confined to the small chaplet of cowslips and blue-bells, which are borne by little timid country girls, or rosy urchins, whose young voices salute us with “ Please to remember the May morning.” The hawthorn or May seldom mingles its blossoms with the other wild flowers of the garland. Our May-day, according to the new style, being by so many days

earlier than that of our forefathers, the May is not in full flower, except when the spring is unusually forward, and many a lament used to be uttered some years since by old dames in villages, that philosophy should have ever interfered with the seasons of the year, and brought the May-day before its time.

In a few rural spots of our country, a May-day queen is chosen and crowned with flowers, and the day kept as a holiday; but this is only in villages remote from towns, which old customs haunt the longest. In some villages of Cornwall May-day sports are continued in almost their primitive fashion; the day is devoted to out-of-doors enjoyment, and at Helston the youths and maidens cover themselves with the snowy wreaths of spring, and preceded by the queen of the May, dance merrily through the houses, and scatter flowers about them.

It is generally thought that our May-day customs are derived from the practice observed by the ancients, of dedicating the last four days of May and the first of April to the goddess

Flora. In our country, three or four centuries ago, May was kept universally. Even the avenues of the Metropolis looked like bowers, from the boughs which each man hung over his doorway. The young people of both sexes went a-Maying after midnight, accompanied by bands of music. Crowds of them went out of the town, as Stowe says, "into the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds, praising God after their kind." They returned at sunrise, in joyful procession, carrying large boughs of hawthorn, birch, and other trees, garlanded with coronals of wild flowers, and bearing large nosegays in their hands, with which they decorated the doors and windows of their houses.

Hear our old poet Herrick invoking his mistress on a May morning :

Each flower has wept and bow'd toward the East,
Above an hour since, yet you are not dress'd—
Nay, not so much as out of bed,
When all the birds have matins said,

And sung their thankful hymns ;—'t is sin,
 Nay profanation, to keep in ;
 Whereas a thousand virgins on this day
 Spring sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise ! and put on your foliage, and be seen
 To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green,
 And sweet as Flora. Take no care
 For jewels for your gown or hair ;
 Fear not, for the leaves will strew
 Gems in abundance upon you ;—
 Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
 Against you come, some orient pearls unwept.

• • • • •

Come, my Corinna ! come, and coming, mark
 How each field turns a street—each street a park,
 Made green and trimm'd with trees !—see how
 Devotion gives each house a bough
 Or branch !—each porch, each door, ere this
 An ark, a tabernacle is,
 Made up of whitethorn neatly interwove,
 As if here were those cooler shades of love.
 Can such delights be in the street
 And open fields, and we not see 't ?
 Come, we 'll abroad, and let's obey
 The proclamation made for May,
 And sin no more, as we have done, by staying,
 But, my Corinna ! come, let's go a-Maying.

The May-blossom, whose very name awakens pleasant remembrances of the vernal season, has ever been a favourite object to all who delight in rural scenery. Its profusion, its sweetness, its blossoming in spring-time, all lay their claims to our regard. It is the loveliest flower of the loveliest month—the ornament of every hedge, of every glade. Its petals lie scattered over our pathway in each secluded lane, blown about by the winds, which are not yet soothed into their summer gentleness.

The hawthorn is often merely a large bush, which, while young, grows very rapidly; but when trained, as it sometimes is, into a tall tree, it is of slow growth, and the lapse of many years seems to make no change in its appearance. The traveller who, after a long absence, returns to gaze upon the hawthorn under whose shade he once sat, conning his lessons, or perchance musing idly upon the life which then lay all before him, sees it now just such a tree as he left it. Many changes may have taken place in his home and his friends, and many

natural objects may have changed too. The young larches, and oaks and ashes, which his own hands had planted, have grown taller and stouter, and scarcely look the same; but the old hawthorn bush is there; its very shape seems unaltered; not a bough seems longer than when he last saw it, and its massy top is still covered with a wreath of flowers, as in days of yore.

There is no natural object which better than a tree serves as a memorial of the events of the past. It is among the most beautiful of the productions of earth, and is comparatively a durable memento. When we read of the "Oak of Weeping," beneath whose wide-spreading boughs the pilgrim family of Jacob buried the nurse of their mother, we feel that no epitaph could have been more expressive, and no monument more suitable. The trees of Skakspeare and Milton, of Chaucer and Tasso, have been regarded with veneration and affection by many visitors, and will still stand in many future years, to tell of those for whose sakes they have been honoured.

There is not a country in Europe where the common hawthorn does not grow wild, and where its clusters of white flowers do not enliven the landscape. If, during the latter end of May, we enter a cottage of almost any English village, we find it intermingled with the lilac bough, forming a nosegay for the fireplace, and strewing over the wide brick hearth some of its innumerable blossoms.

In France the hawthorn is often called *l'Epine noble*, from the idea that it furnished the crown of thorns which was placed around the brow of our Saviour before his crucifixion. In Greece its white flowers are made into a garland for the bride, and strewed over the marriage altar. The spine or thorn which abounds upon this and other plants, is often made to disappear by cultivation. Thus the pear-tree is smooth in the garden, but is, in its wild state, beset with thorns. This is not the case with the prickly, which, arising from the bark only, and being distinct from the wood of the stem, is not affected by the circumstances of the plant. The

prickle may be stripped off with the bark, as in the rose and bramble, but the thorn, proceeding from the wood, cannot be torn off in this way.

The pink-blossoming hawthorn (*Crataégus rósea*) is merely a variety of the common hawthorn. Another variety — the yellow-berried hawthorn (*Crataégus aurea*) — which is often planted in shrubberies, is still more beautiful. It is familiarly called the golden thorn, and well deserves its appellation, for its fruit has the appearance of golden berries, and its young buds are of a bright yellow.

All the species of hawthorn are ornamental shrubs. The pyracanthus, or evergreen thorn (*Crataégus pyracántha*), is a well known and favourite species, often planted against houses, and covering the wall with its brilliant and abundant scarlet berries and evergreen foliage. It is one of the most beautiful shrubs in the garden during the month of October. The Mexican thorn has large yellow fruit, which might rival the golden apples of the Hesperides

in appearance; and the fruit of the scented thorn is very agreeable in flavour.

A variety of the common hawthorn called the Glastonbury thorn, instead of flowering in May, blossoms during winter, and was for many years believed to blow regularly on Christmas-day. The Abbey of Glastonbury in Somersetshire, now a heap of ruins, and of whose origin none but vague memorials exist, was said, by the monks, to have been the residence of Joseph of Arimathea. According to their legend, he came to Britain accompanied by eleven followers, and raised to the memory of the Virgin the first Christian temple erected in this country. The celebrated hawthorn bush is said to have sprung from a staff which Joseph stuck into the ground on Christmas-day, which, blossoming immediately, attested the approbation of God to his mission, as the blooming of Aaron's rod confirmed the priesthood to the family of Israel, while the yearly blooming of this hawthorn, at this unusual season, was regarded by the monks as sufficient

confirmation of the truth of their statement. A fable propagated probably by some who had an interest in attaching sacredness to the Abbey and its precincts, easily obtained belief in those superstitious times, when all that was not evident to the senses was recognised as miraculous. And this thorn, which is certainly interesting from its singularity, was regarded formerly almost universally with blind veneration.

The flowering of the Glastonbury thorn was once deemed so great a wonder, that our merchants annually exported its blossoms into foreign countries, for the benefit of the curious. The original tree of the Abbey garden was partly cut down in the reign of Elizabeth by the Puritans, who, in their pious zeal to clear away the superstitions of the land, were too prone to destroy anything, however valuable, to which a legend was attached. The other part was cut down during the Great Rebellion. At that time, however, a number of plants derived from the original stock were in existence.

It is now well known that the Glastonbury

hawthorn is not regular in the day of putting forth its blossoms; and although it flowers in December, January, or February, this occurs as often in the last as in the first-named month. Cuttings taken from this thorn, have retained their peculiarity of bearing blossoms in winter, and a hawthorn in the arboretum of Kew gardens, is often covered with its white clusters while the snow surrounds it.

The hawthorn belongs to the rose order *Rosaceæ*, and any one who examines the flower of the briar rose, will see that there is a great family likeness in all the plants composing it. This likeness is lost in the double rose of the garden, because its whole form is completely altered by culture. None of the rose tribe are found in the southern hemisphere. The beautiful white or pink blossoms of this order, covering the orchard and garden trees, form the most prominent natural characteristic of the lovely spring. They begin with the almond tree, which, long before the trees in general have put forth their leaves, is covered with a pro-

fusion of flowers, and are succeeded by the peach, and the various blossoms of gardens and orchards. In the cherry counties, as well as in those in which apples are cultivated for cider, few more beautiful objects in spring than the fruit orchards, present themselves to the traveller. Evelyn, while warmly recommending the use of cider instead of the more recently introduced beverage of beer, thus remarks:—"Not to refine upon the rare effects of cider, which is, above all, the most eminent, soberly to exhilarate the spirits of us hypochondriacal Islanders, and by a specific quality to chase away that unsociable spleen without excess; the very blossom of the fruit perfumes and purifies the ambient air, which (as Mr. Beale well observes in his 'Hertfordshire Orchards') is conceived, conduces so much to the constant health and longevity for which that county has been always celebrated, fencing their habitations and sweet recesses from winds and winter invasions, the heat of the sun, and his insufferable darts. And if (saith he) we

may acknowledge grateful trifles, for that they harbour a constant aviary of sweet singers, which are here retained with the charge of Italian wires."

The queen of our gardens—the rose—in its many thousand varieties, is at the head of this order; its beautiful conspicuous flowers gracing our parterre, and yielding the most delicious odour, and its pretty simple blossoms perfuming our hedges and lanes. The delight of the East, the theme of the poet in all ages, the praises of the rose have been sung in the language of every nation where it is known. All virtue, all loveliness, has been characterized by it; from the solemn personification of Scripture, of Him whom the "preacher" called the Rose of Sharon, down to the simile of the humblest minstrel that ever touched the harp of poesy.

The Romans, whose profuse use of flowers subjected them to the reproofs of their philosophers, were accustomed to strew roses over the streets at their public festivals. The Egyptians made the rose a symbol of silence, and

crowned Harpocrates with a garland of its blossoms. The Eastern lady still tells her love by sending a rose to her lover; and "the time of roses" is yet a poetical name for our summer.

To this order belong those pretty velvety yellow flowers, the potentillas, which creep over the banks by the wayside, their blossoms shaped like those of the wild rose; and the taller avens, or herb-bennet, which has, after flowering, a clammy ball of spines, by which its seeds cling to different objects, and are dispersed far and wide. The blackberry, strawberry, and most of the fruits both of our woodlands and cultivated grounds belong also to it.

One very common tree, both in shrubberies and woods—the mountain ash (*Pyrus aucupária*)—is deserving a little notice. It is, in Scotland, called the Rowan tree. In Westmoreland they term it the Wiggen tree, and the old people place it on their pillows to charm away evil spirits. The blossoms of this tree are very much like those of the hawthorn, except that their colour is not so clear a white, and

they stand in clusters amongst a foliage which may well be termed feathery, as their leaves convey the idea of plumage. Rich-looking red berries succeed the blossoms, giving a cheerfulness to the gloomy November, and greeting one

“ Like a pleasant thought
When such are wanted :”

but the thrushes will not suffer them to hang long untouched, as they, with their companions the blackbirds, claim them as their reward for the summer songs, and seldom leave a berry in spots which they haunt. The cottage children in Wales go, with their little baskets, to seek the “ Rowan of the rock,” and gather its berries for their mothers, who crush them, and make them into a liquor of which they are very fond. Mr. Bingley says this drink has the flavour of perry. These berries are also used in making punch, their acid serving instead of lemon juice.

It is supposed that the Druids regarded the mountain-ash with great veneration, as it has

often been found planted near those huge piles of stones which they have heaped up in various parts of our island. That some ancient traditions belong to this tree is certain; as in many counties in England, as well as in the Highlands of Scotland, it has for centuries been planted near houses, to preserve them from evil spirits. It is thought, too, by the Highland peasantry, that a branch of the rowan carried in the hand can defend the bearer from any charm or witchcraft. The dairymaid, as she follows her cows to their pasture, drives them onward with a branch of this tree, persuaded that by this precaution she shall preserve them from danger, and fully believing that at sight of the rowan the witches turn pale and tremble. The hardness of the wood of the mountain-ash renders it valuable.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANEMONE, OR WIND-FLOWER—MUSIC OF NATURE—WOOD
ANEMONE — BLUE MOUNTAIN ANEMONE — PASQUE
FLOWER ANEMONE—WILD YELLOW ANEMONE—NATU-
RALIZATION OF FOREIGN PLANTS—CORN COCKLE—
FUMITORY—GARDEN ANEMONIES—VERSES ON WOOD
ANEMONIES.

And flowers—the fairy-peopled world of flowers,
Thou from the dust hast set that glory free ;
Colouring the cowslip with the sunny hours,
And pencilling the wood anemone :
Silent they seem—yet each to thoughtful eye
Glows with mute poesy !

Mrs. Hemans.

ARE you, my reader, one who loves music ?
Not that music alone which is uttered by human
voice, or swells from harp or lute ; but do you
love the music of nature ? If so, away to the
woods in March. It is not merely to the song

of the birds that your attention is invited ; they are not yet carolling in full chorus, though

“ There’s a blackbird and one or two thrushes,
And a far-off wind that rushes,
And the cuckoo’s sovereign cry
Fills all the hollow of the sky.”

The robin sings loudly, and the ringdove coos softly to its mate. Nature is full of music ; but the winds, as they career among the tall trees, or sweep away the clouds, or raise the ocean in their fury, or softly stir the leaves and flowers, have the most varied and sonorous tones of any of her many melodies. “ Did you never observe,” says Gray, “ while rocking winds are piping loud, that pause, as the gust is recollecting itself and rising upon the ear in a shrill plaintive note, like the swell of an Eolian harp—I do assure you, there is nothing in the world so like the voice of a spirit.” This idea was not peculiar to the poetical mind of Gray. Almost every one who has stood listening to the cadences of the wind, as they died

away, then again swelled in full peal, has fancied this resemblance. Even the inspired writers were reminded by this element of an invisible presence, when they speak of the Almighty as "making the clouds his chariot, and walking upon the wings of the wind;" or as "riding upon the whirlwind and the storm, while the clouds are the dust of his feet."

The sublime poetry of Holy Writ is so full of imagery derived from nature, that we can scarcely look abroad over the face of the earth without being reminded of some of its comparisons. The fowl of the air, the lamb of the fold, the corn ready for the sickle, the flower of the field, the morning cloud, the early dew, the green pastures, the still waters,—bring all to the religious mind some emblem of beauty, some subject of contemplation. When the ancient people were filled with dread, Isaiah says of them and their monarch, "His heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind." The sound of the rolling leaf, so often rustling in the autumn

forest, was to chase the wicked, and they were, in their instability, declared to be as the chaff which the wind driveth away.

But it is time to turn to the woodland flowers, which, though not so numerous as during the height of summer, or the rich days of autumn, are already trembling in youth and beauty under the trees and bushes.

Towards the end of March, the wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) begins to display its snowy buds and beautifully formed leaves. But it will not be in full glory till April, when there will not be a spot in all the wood but it will be seen, contrasting itself with the deep blue of the wild hyacinth, and looking up with the primrose between the withered leaves which yet cover the woodpath. Sometimes a delicate lilac tinge colours its petals, like a blush on a maiden's cheek, and sometimes the wood anemone is coloured like the rose-bud.

The roots of this plant are so full of fibres, that they by their interlacings form a complete mat-work beneath the surface of the earth,

which extends all over the wood that they frequent. The wood anemone grows very far north, and is as common in the woods of North America as in those of our own land.

Linnæus observed that the wood anemone expanded in Sweden at the same time as the swallow returned from its migration; and that the marsh marigold bloomed when the cuckoo's note commenced. The same circumstances have been remarked in this country by a British naturalist. Country children call by the name of cuckoo-flower, not only the wood anemone, but the cardamine, and several other spring flowers. With them spring and the cuckoo stand in intimate connexion;

“ When skies are blue
Then comes the cuckoo,”

says their rude rhyme, and all the winter rains wait only the arrival of the cuckoo to give way to clear sunshine.

A naturalist who took an annual account of the days on which various flowers came into

bloom in spring, found that the wood anemone never blossomed earlier than March 16th, and never later than April 22d. The observations of this naturalist were made each spring during thirty years. All agree as to the beauty of the wild anemone, all are prepared to utter its praises. Some persons can also discover in it a very pleasant odour, while others deny that it possesses any.

It seems singular that an odour should be perceptible to one person and imperceptible to another, who is possessed of an equally acute sense of smelling; yet it is certain that one person can detect the perfume existing in one flower, while another is acutely alive to that of a different one, and cannot distinguish this. Of course, the lavender, rose, myrtle, and plants diffusing a powerful fragrance, are smelt by every person; but many accustomed to walk daily beneath the lime trees, are incapable of perceiving their scent, and lose the regale which they present to the many; and the same may be said of various delicately scented blossoms.

The anemone derives its name from a Greek word, *anemos*, signifying wind; and its English name of wind-flower, is a common and poetical appellation. This has been given to it because many of the species grow on elevated situations, where they are exposed to high winds; or, according to other writers, because they tremble and shiver before the blasts of spring. Pliny asserts that it never blooms except when the winds blow. Though most frequently found under the shelter of overhanging branches, the wood anemone sometimes rears its frail-looking flower upon the summits of hills and mountains, fearless of the storm. It is evident that the shelter of trees is not necessary to it, since it may occasionally be found in pastures; and on spots which have once been woods, but on which the trees have been felled, it rises up, year after year, exposed to all the fitful gusts of March and April.

This plant is considered very unwholesome to cattle; and two species of anemone, which grow wild in America, are quite fatal to animals who eat them.

The Egyptians regarded the anemone as an emblem of sickness, probably on account of its noxious properties. Perhaps, however, the frail and delicate appearance of the wood species first suggested the idea. The flush of pale red which tinges the white petals of the wood anemone, might well remind us of that delicate glow which lingers on the cheek of the consumptive sufferer, marking to others the inward decay, but giving a lustre and a glow of beauty, which deceive its victim.

The wood anemone is another of our wild flowers peculiarly sensitive to the changes of weather. When a storm threatens the wood, the flower closes, and if

“ Between the gloaming and the mirk,
When the kye come hame,”

we wander into the quiet copses, we shall find it closed. The winds of heaven have sung their evening psalm among the branches, and the wood flower is hushed to sleep.

The wood anemone, though generally a com-

mon flower, is not found in some counties of England. It is most prevalent on moist soils.

Another wild kind, the pasque-flower anemone (*Anemone pulsatilla*), bears a handsome purple blossom, and is often reared in gardens. Its native haunt is the chalky soil. It is a silky, downy plant.

The yellow wood anemone (*Anemone ranunculoides*) is a rare flower, but found in woods about Wrotham, in Kent; a neighbourhood remarkable for scarce plants, and well known to botanists.

The remaining British species, the blue mountain anemone (*Anemone Apennina*), is known by its extremely beautiful flowers, which are of a bright blue colour. It is, as its name imports, a dweller upon the mountains, and some botanists consider that it is not a truly wild plant.

It is not always easy to distinguish native plants from those which have been scattered by the winds from cultivated grounds, or introduced into our fields and lanes by those who

are in the habit of planting seeds from their gardens, in the wild portions of the landscape. Besides that, birds carry seeds to a considerable distance, and they are often conveyed among the grain sown in the corn-field. The common bluebottle of the corn-field (*Centaurea cyánu*s), and the handsome corn-cockle (*Agrostémma gíthago*), though so very common in our corn-lands, are not indigenous plants, but were brought from the East among the grain; and the fumitory (*fumária*), now shewing its small red blossoms under every hedge, and in every field, and coming up between the brown ears of corn, was, in the time of Gesner, a rare plant in Europe, and is supposed to have been introduced from some eastern country. It is now so plentiful that it well deserves to be called smoke-of-the-earth,—*fume de terre*—as the French term it, and of which our fumitory is probably a corruption.

Some species of garden anemone, especially the poppy anemone (*Anemóne coronária*), and the star anemone (*Anemóne horténsis*), are well

known as winter flowers, decking with their brilliant blossoms the beds on which few other flowers are blooming. They are so hardy that they may be made to blossom in any month of the year, by proper management in planting them. They grow wild generally throughout the south of Europe, and are found decking the hedge-banks there as richly as the primroses of our meadow borders deck those of our colder climate. It is chiefly from the Isle of Candia that florists have procured the beautiful species of ranunculus and anemone which constitute the ornament of our parterre. A French traveller mentions, that in the lovely islands of the Mediterranean, "whole plains are enamelled with narcissuses; while lilies, tuberoses, hyacinths, roses, saffron and orchises, of uncommon beauty, present themselves at every step."

More than twenty species of anemone have been cultivated in this country, and have been brought from various parts of Europe, as well as from North America and Siberia. This is what is termed a florist's flower, and having

received so much attention, it has been greatly improved. Like other flowers which florists have taken under their especial care, its criterion of beauty is rather arbitrary. It is quite necessary, with this plant, as with the tulip and auricula, that its admirer should be a florist, or he may perhaps praise the common anemones instead of the more choice specimens, and like the gentleman among the tulips, mentioned in the *Tatler*, be laughed at for his ignorance. Many a visitor to the anemones has felt like this gentleman by the tulip bed, who at length desired the owner of the garden to "let him know which were the finest of the flowers; for that he was so unskilful in the art, that he thought the most beautiful were the most valuable, and that those which had the gayest colours were the most beautiful." But while we are indebted to the florists for their great improvement of so many valuable flowers, and while we rejoice in seeing them making their culture a means of recreation, we can easily pass by a few harmless whims, and wish them abundant

and increased success, and hope that many more may imitate them. The anemone belongs to the same order as the ranunculus, of which some account was given in a preceding chapter.

WOOD ANEMONIES.

Flowers of the wild wood ! your home is there,
'Mid all that is fragrant, all that is fair,
Where the woodmouse makes his home in earth,
Where gnat and butterfly have their birth,
Where leaves are dancing over each flower,
Fanning it well in the noontide hour,
And the breath of the wind is murmuring low,
As branches are bending to and fro.

Sweet are the memories that ye bring
Of the pleasant leafy woods of spring ;
Of the wild bee so gladly humming,
Joyous that earth's young flowers are coming ;
Of the nightingale and merry thrush,
Cheerfully singing from every bush ;
And the cuckoo's note, when the air is still,
Heard far away on the distant hill.

Ye have lovely companions too,
The primrose and the violet blue ;
And the celandine with starry rays,
And the bluebell, which the poets praise ;

And the stitchwort, with its cheek of pearl,
And the woodruff with its leafy whorl,
And sanicle nodding before the breeze,
Beneath the shadow of pleasant trees.

Pure are the sights and sounds of the wild
Ye can bring to the heart of nature's child ;
Plain and beautiful is the story
That ye tell of your Maker's glory ;
Useful the lesson that ye bear,
That fragile is all, however fair,
While ye teach that time is on his wing,
As ye open the blossoms of every spring. A. P.

CHAPTER XV.

SCARLET PIMPERNEL — CORN-FIELD — SINGING DURING
RURAL LABOUR—CLOSING OF PIMPERNEL—NATURAL
INDICATIONS OF ATMOSPHERIC CHANGES — SIBERIAN
SOWTHISTLE — BLUE PIMPERNEL AT MADEIRA — BOG
PIMPERNEL—GARDEN PIMPERNEL.

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly unassuming spirit !
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane—there 's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Wordsworth.

THESE words were addressed by the poet of nature to his golden favourite, the celandine, one of the earliest blooming flowers in the wreath of spring, and one too which is lavished plentifully over every part of our country.

They may with equal propriety be referred to the scarlet pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), which is no less prodigal of its beauty, or more limited in its haunts. Its seeds are scattered over hill and plain, and its brightly coloured little blossoms often appear in the gardens, gleaming especially from among the broad leaves which cover the strawberry beds.

But the scene of nature to which the pimpernel is the most constant is the corn-field, where it blooms, just as the wheat is getting ripe, until some weeks after it has been gathered in from the field. The old name of this flower was *centunculus*, from *cento*, a covering, because it spread itself in such quantity over cultivated fields; but that name is now given to a plant in some measure resembling it, the little rose-coloured chaffweed, the smallest wild plant which bears a distinct flower.

The scarlet pimpernel must be known to every one who notices wild flowers, for it is scarcely less common than the primrose; but perhaps it is not known by this designation, as in the

country it is more frequently called the shepherd's warning, or poor man's weather-glass; and children often know it by the name of bird's-eye. It may however be recognised simply by its bright scarlet colour, which is, among our wild blossoms, peculiar to itself and its companion in the wheat-field, the red poppy, though there are several flowers, which, like the pheasant's-eye, or Adonis, are of a deep crimson.

It would be almost impossible to wander along the pathway, bounded by waving corn, without seeing this flower to the right and left of our walk. And who that loves the country does not occasionally stray among the corn-fields? Who does not feel a pleasure in listening to the song of the reaper, as it floats upon the calm air of noon, mingling with the voices of the few birds which are vocal during the glowing noons of August, and with the low humming of unseen insects, filling the imagination with all those dreams of the happiness of a country life, which, though it may have been overdrawn by the poet,

is not quite so unenviable as the world may deem it. Now and then the sound of several voices may be heard together, as the band of rustics are singing among the sheaves. "Such," says Sir Walter Scott,

"Such have I heard in Scottish land,
Rise from the merry harvest band,
When falls before the mountaineer,
Or lowland plains the ripened ear;
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
Now a wild chorus swells the song;
Oft have I listened and stood still,
As it came softened up the hill."

It is, however, more often that we hear the solitary than the united song of the peasant labourer, and even this, like the song of the Venetian gondolier, is gradually becoming more rare. A passage often quoted from St. Jerome says, that in his day, "you could not go into the country but you might hear the ploughman at his hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vine-dresser singing David's psalms." In Germany the song of the labourer may be still always heard, and one might as well expect to

wander in the country, and to find the birds all silent, as to hear no human voice in song, where the labours of the field are going forward.

The pretty little pimpernel is quite a village favourite, from its usefulness in foretelling the approach of rain. Its power of closing its petals in damp weather is known to many country people; and when clouds are passing over the blue sky, villagers often refer to it to ascertain whether they are likely to discharge their contents upon the earth. Darwin enumerates the shutting up of the flower among the signs of rain:

“ Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel,
In fiery red the sun doth rise,
Then wades through clouds to mount the skies;
’Twill surely rain, we see’t with sorrow,
No working in the fields to-morrow.”

When the rain continues however for many days together, the pimpernel loses its sensibility, and fails to give its signal to the husbandman.

The closing of this, and other flowers similarly constituted in this respect, is among the

many indications of atmospheric changes which enable the intelligent countryman as confidently to predict them, as the sailor knows by the winds and waves, and the sounds of ocean birds, that a storm is coming.

Remarkable as is the circumstance of the flowers anticipating rain by hiding themselves in their chalice, still more singular is the habit of the Siberian sowthistle (*Sonchus sibiricus*). This plant, during that clear weather which is generally favourable to flowers, never uncloses; but let a thick mist overspread the atmosphere, or a cloud arise, large enough to drive home the honey-bee, and it will soon unfold its light blue blossoms.

It is a matter of regret that many who pass their lives among the scenes of nature, should so little observe the interesting objects which are constantly around them. Such persons speak of the monotony of a country life, for they do not see or hear any of those things which delight the observer, and present a constant fund of amusement. They who mark

well the habits of animals, birds, and plants, may find a sure data on which to calculate the coming weather. Observe only the merry robin. On a summer evening he greets us from the garden palings, or the orchard tree, as blithely as possible, and then we may be sure that the fine weather will last; but sometimes even when the air is pleasant, and seems dry to our less acute sensibilities, poor robin looks sad and drooping, and then the rain is coming.

Like the robin, many plants possess so acute a sensibility to atmospheric influences, that they feel moisture in the air long before it is discernible by us. Thus when a storm is approaching, several species of anemone fold up their blossoms; the almond-scented flowers of the wild pink convolvulus wind themselves together; the awns of the wild oat, and the sweet-scented vernal grass of our meadow, stand in an erect position, and the clover leaves are drawn closely up.

Naturalists cannot altogether discover why moisture should affect some plants and not

others ; but the regular changes of these natural barometers seem a providential arrangement for the need of those plants in which they occur. We may infer this from seeing the different positions of several flowers according to their circumstances. Thus the poppy, when in bud, hangs down on its stem, and by this means the petals are preserved from rain and winds ; but when it is fully expanded and stronger, and the sun's rays are necessary for its perfection, it spreads open to the full light of day. The violet again, while its seed is forming, shades the capsule by its purple corolla ; but when the seeds are ripe, and it is requisite that they spring to some distance from their capsules, then the flower rises up with the cup for its support, and throws out its seed. Adaptations of this kind are frequent and striking in the vegetable kingdom. Thus a common species of grass has a bulbous root when in dry situations, and a fibrous one when it grows in a moist meadow, or by the water side ; because in the latter case the bulbous root is not necessary to hold a

supply of moisture for the plant. So too the orchis plants, which grow on the ground in Europe, are provided with roots formed of large lobes; but when they hang upon the trees of the American forests, their roots are formed of a number of fibres, in order that they may penetrate the bark of the trees.

In former days the pimpernel was considered as a remedy against low spirits, and a promoter of mirth. It was probably on this account that it received its name of *anagallis*, which signifies to laugh.

The seeds of this plant, which are very numerous, are enclosed in small capsules, and are eaten by the birds; so that independently of its value to man, as an ornament of his daily path, the flower is useful to a large class of living creatures, and thus doubly contributes to our gratification.

There is but one other British species of pimpernel; but the common pimpernel varies in the colour of its flowers, being sometimes found of a white, and more frequently of a blue colour.

The blue pimpernel (*Anagallis cerúlæa*) is not uncommon in some parts of England. It is described as growing in beautiful little tufts about the hills of Madeira, and enlivening them by its cheerful colour, which may bear comparison with the azure of the sky.

The other native species, the bog pimpernel (*Anagallis tenélla*), is among the most delicately beautiful of our wild plants. Its blossoms are larger than those of the scarlet pimpernel, and of a pale rose colour, and the leaves, which are numerous, are very small in proportion to the blossom. It is found on wet marshy grounds, but is rare.

There are a few species of cultivated pimpernel in the garden and conservatory which have been introduced here from the countries at the south of Europe.

This flower belongs to the same order as the primrose (*Primulacææ*), of which some account has been given in an earlier chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

FORGET-ME-NOT — HAUNTS OF COUNTRY CHILDREN —
ISLETS ON THE STREAMS—USE OF FORGET-ME-NOT BY
THE GERMANS—FIELD OF WATERLOO—VARIOUS NAMES
OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT—HAIRS ON PLANTS—EFFECT
OF ACCURATE INVESTIGATIONS ON MENTAL HABITS—
BORAGE—HELIOTROPE—COMPFREY—GROMWELL.

Ye field-flowers ! the gardens eclipse you, 't is true,
Yet, wildings of nature, I dote upon you,
 For ye waft me to summers of old,
When the earth teemed around me with fairy delight,
And daisies and buttercups gladdened my sight,
 Like treasures of silver and gold.

Even now what affections the violet awakes,
What loved little islands, twice seen in the lakes,
 Can the wild water-lily restore !
What landscapes I read in the primrose's looks
What pictures of pebbles and minnowy brooks,
 In the vetches that tangle the shore !

Campbell.

If, amid the rich glow of summer noon, we
ramble abroad, how delighted are we to rest in

glen or copsewood, or beside the river, which, "gliding at its own sweet will," diffuses a sense of coolness even on the hottest day. It is pleasant to linger on the river brink, and to find a group of children playing among the flowers, and collecting images of beauty to which they may look back in future days. Not altogether idle are the hours spent in wading among the sedges to gather the forget-me-not, or in throwing stones into the stream—for the little loungers are drinking in the delights of the blue cloudless summer heavens, and sweet melodies of birds, and murmurings of waters, and sounds of playful and healthful breezes, and all the beauties and choruses innumerable, which are to render

" The mind a mansion for all lovely forms,
The memory as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies,"

which may soothe them in coming years of sorrow or toil. They will not perchance any of them be poets, yet there is somewhat of the

spirit of poetry in many a human heart, and it is seen when the toil-worn man turns him back to the scenes of his childhood, and expatiates on the rural joys which he then knew, and snatches a moment from busy thought to shut his eyes on the world, and bring before his mind the grassy turf and the flower-crowned stream, once so familiar, and never to be forgotten.

Happy are the children whose home is in the country! Happy, not alone the child of the rich, but the little cottager! Nay, it is more especially among the latter class that we are led to this remark; for we instinctively compare him with the poor child of the town, where, in some narrow alley, groups of little ones play amidst the dirt, breathing the impure and confined air, and exhibiting, to its full extent, the saying of Lamb, "that the children of the poor are often dragged up, not brought up." The wide-spreading meadow is the scene of the early sports of the peasant child,—his first companions the young lambs and summer

flowers. His labours are fitted to inspire him with cheerful feelings, and he drives the birds from the field, or wanders with the cattle down the green lane, or otherwise joins in rustic employ, with as light a heart as the morning bird or the evening grasshopper.

How beautiful are the little islands of the stream, edged with the tall white meadow-sweet, which sends its perfume far up over the green lands that lie around, and contrasts with the deep lilac colour of the purple loosestrife! The willow herb, or codlins and cream, as children call it, grows in perfection there; and there too bloom the tall yellow water-flag, and the vetches, and the rich water-lily, which, seated on its round leaf, seems to swim over the crystal stream. The water-plantain, with its numerous small pink blossoms, grows in thick clusters quite down in the water, mingling with the white flowers and large spear-shaped leaves of the arrow-head, or half shading the large cup of the yellow water-lily. Then, too, the blue-eyed forget-me-not covers the little isles in

such abundance that many of them well deserve the name of azure islands. The water-rat hides among the flowers, nibbling with much glee at the arrow-head, or rushing out from under its broad green leaves; and the water-fowl, followed by her young, sails across the stream in all the stateliness of matron dignity, and the little meek-eyed daisy grows beside the yellow velvet flower of the silver-weed, or the blue blossoms and succulent leaves of the brooklime.

A little bright blue flower—the meadow scorpion-grass (*Myosótis arvensis*) which is common in green fields, is often called the forget-me-not; but the plant, which by botanists and sentimentalists throughout Europe is pronounced to be the true forget-me-not, is the flower which grows upon the stream. It is the largest species of scorpion-grass that is to be found wild. The *Myosótis palustris* has a blossom of a bright blue colour, shaped something like that of a primrose, but much smaller: it has a yellow centre, with a small portion of white on each segment of the coloured part of the flower. The

plant altogether seldom exceeds a foot in height. It is, with the exception of the water-lilies — “those flowers made of light” — the most beautiful of the many coloured ornaments of pools and rivulets which our country scenery presents ; and it is generally very abundant in such places. It is often sold in pots or bouquets in the markets of Paris.

The Germans, who display considerable taste in decking graves with flowers, place the forget-me-not upon their tombs. If this flower be taken from the water, and planted in dry places, its aspect becomes considerably altered, but it is still a pretty blossom. Its frequent use in the burial-place might allow of its bearing the same name among the Germans that the Italians give to the periwinkle, which they employ for a similar purpose, and call *fior di morto*—the flower of death.

Meet offerings they are to the kind and the good,
Those flowers of an azure as pure as the sky ;
And there are they gathered in mournfullest mood,
Or planted and tended with many a sigh,

Where friendship reposes, or love is asleep,
Their beauty is decking the lowly green sod ;
While heart-stricken mourners come hither to weep,
Over her who has left them to rise to her God.

It is said that after the battle of Waterloo an immense quantity of forget-me-not sprung up upon different parts of the soil enriched by the blood of heroes. This was probably the small but bright blue meadow scorpion-grass, which, as before mentioned, sometimes receives that name. A poet might say that the appearance of such a flower in this memorable spot seemed to ask that we should not soon forget those who perished on the field.

The name of mouse-ear (*Myosótis*) was given to these plants, from a fancied similarity in the form of the leaf to the ear of a mouse; and they received the name of scorpion-grass because the top of the stems bend round while the buds are unblown, in the shape of a scorpion's tail. The legend of the dying knight who cast a handful of these flowers to his mistress, and faintly uttered "forget me not," as he sank

under the water, is a very pretty, though scarcely a probable origin of the name.

The young buds of the water scorpion-grass, as well as several of the field species, are, before expansion, of a delicate rose-colour, which tint gradually becomes paler as they devolope themselves, though the under surface of the flower, when fully open, always retains a shade of this colour.

Seven species of scorpion-grass grow wild in Great Britain, and some others have been introduced into the garden from different parts of Europe. One kind (*Myosótis suavéolens*), a native of Hungary, is odoriferous.

It is, probably, to the bright little blue field scorpion-grass, which is often found in woods, that the following lines refer. The author of this work cannot tell who is their writer, or if they have ever appeared in print, but their simple beauty will render any apology for their insertion here unnecessary.

THE WEE FLOWER.

A bonny wee flower grew green i' the wuds,
Like a twinklin star among the cluds,
And the langer it levit the greener it grew,
For 't was lulled by the winds and fed by the dew.
When the mornin sun raise frae its eastern ha',
This bonny wee flower was the earliest o' a'
To open its buds sealed up in the dew,
And spread out its leaves o' the yellow and blue ;
When the winds were still, and the sun rode high,
And the clear mountain burn ran wimplin by,
When the wee birds sang, and the wilderness bee
Was floating awa like a clud o'er the sea,
This bonny wee flower was bloomin unseen,
The sweet child o' simmer in its rokely green ;
And when the nicht clud grew dark o'er the plain,
When the stars were out, and the moon on the wane,
When the bird and the bee were gane to rest,
And the dews o' the nicht the green earth press'd,
The bonny wee flower lay smiling asleep,
Like a beautifu' pearl in the dark green deep ;
And when hairst had come, and the simmer was past,
And the dead leaves were strewn on the circling blast,
The bonny wee flower grew naked and bare,
And its wee leaves shrunk i' the frozen air ;
So this bonny wee flower hung down its brow head,
And the bricht mornin sun flung its beams on its bed,
And the pale stars looked out—but the wee flower was dead.

The scorpion-grass has received great attention from botanists, and the plants composing this genus are in some of their species so similar that their chief mark of distinction has been found in the manner of growth of the hairs which are upon their foliage. The *degree* of hairiness upon plants is not a permanent character, as it varies with culture, situation, or other accidental circumstances; but Sir James Smith has observed, that the *direction* of the growth of the hairs or the bristles on a plant is as little liable to exception as any mark of distinction which vegetables present, as it is always the same in every plant of the species. He adds that some species of the bedstraw are admirably characterised by "the bristles of their leaves being hooked backwards or forwards."

Those who are not accustomed to examine plants with a microscope, are little aware of the wonders they present to the close observer, or of the perfect structure which even the smallest plant exhibits. The situation of the hairs, as well as their mode of arrangement on the stems

and leaves of vegetables, differ greatly in various instances. In some cases they are disposed in a starry form,—in others they are branched and entangled. Some hairs are armed with barbs at their summits, which prevent their being extracted from any object they enter. Some are cylindrical in form, others jointed like a bamboo; and occasionally the hairs themselves are beset with still finer hairs. The downy clothing is designed, in most plants, to defend them from winds or insects, or from too great a degree of cold, or the heats of summer. In addition to these more obvious purposes, it has been thought by many philosophers that hairs serve, by the number of points which they present to the air, “to convey a degree of electricity from the atmosphere, or to restore the electric equilibrium which may have been disturbed by the processes of vegetation.” Hairs are never found on very succulent plants, nor on those which are wholly immersed in water.

The minute investigation necessary to ascertain facts of this kind, is by some considered a

useless employment, as if that were unworthy the notice of man, which the Great Creator deemed worthy of his skill. "The world," says Sir Thomas Browne, "was made to be studied and contemplated by man; it is the debt of our reason we owe to God, and the homage we pay for not being beasts."

One great advantage attending botanical observations is, that they accustom the student to habits of accuracy. The effort demanded by the study may at first appear tedious, but the interest shortly acquired as he discovers marks of providential design, and minute and unexpected exemplifications of beauty, will not fail to gratify the observer.

The habit of accuracy once formed, is also likely to extend itself to the general character and is undoubtedly favourable to veracity. Dr. Johnson used to say, "If a child tell you that he saw from one window a circumstance occur, which he saw from another, correct him, lest he acquire a habit of untruth;" and some associates of that great man, though previously men

of integrity, have confessed, that from his frequent advice of marking even the smallest thing attentively, and faithfully stating it, they had acquired a habit of a far stricter veracity.

The scorpion-grass belongs to the natural order Boragineæ. Boragineous plants receive their name from the common borage, a bright blue flower, with very rough leaves. All plants of this order are rough or hairy, except when, like the water forget-me-not, they become smooth from living partly under water. The black stalks of the borage are said to burn like match-paper, and the root is much used in the composition of rouge. The flowers are often gathered by country people, and used in making what is called a cool tankard. According to Pliny, "if the leaves and flowers of borage be put into wine, and that wine drunken, it will cause men to be glad and merry, and it driveth away all heavy sadness and dull melancholy." Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," says also of it—

“ Borage and hellebore fill two scenes,
Sovereign plants to purge the veins
Of melancholy, and cheer the heart
Of those black fumes which make it smart.”

The boragineous plants are mostly weeds, but a few ornamental garden flowers are among them. The Peruvian heliotrope is one of them, and is well known by its lilac blossoms, which are very fragrant. The plant is often called cherry pie, because its odour is thought to resemble that of this dish. The heliotrope received its usual name from two Greek words, sun and to turn, because the ancients thought it always turned its blossoms to meet the rays of that luminary; but neither this flower nor the sunflower deserves the reputation for constancy to the sun, which old philosophers and all poets have ascribed to it,

“ As the sunflower turns to his God when he sets,
The same look that he turned when he rose,”

sounds well as a poetic comparison; but no one must walk into a garden of sunflowers and expect to witness the fact alluded to in these lines.

A plant of this order, the common gromwell

(*Lithospermum officinale*), which bears a small yellowish green flower, and grows on chalky places, has very singular seeds. These are like small nuts, but of a greyish colour, and highly polished. They are as hard as any stones, and indeed contain a great quantity of flint. This plant was formerly called by the elegant name of *herbe aux perles*.

It would be easy among our wild flowers to point out many more boragineous plants. The comfrey (*Symphytum*), a plant whose white flowers droop in clusters among the rough foliage; and the viper's bugloss, a bright blue flower, common on chalky places, its leaves covered with thick bristles, belong to them. Sometimes in gathering flowers at the water-side, one meets with the comfrey; and persons, unaware of the nature of its stem and leaves, find, after gathering it, their hands full of its bristly hairs, and irritated as much as if they had plucked a handful of nettles. It is still in great repute in villages for its medicinal properties.

CHAPTER XVII.

HYACINTH—ORIENTAL HYACINTH—COLOURS OF FLOWERS
—PLANTS REARED IN WATER—FABLE OF THE ANCIENTS
RESPECTING THE HYACINTH—WILD HYACINTH—STAR
OF BETHLEHEM—ASPHODEL.

“Blush not, if o'er your heart be stealing,
A love for things which have no feeling.”

THE hyacinth is a favourite flower of the cultivator, and much cherished on the garden bed. It seems, however, more especially the flower of the lady florist, and to belong as much to the parlour as the garden. It may be reared there when the atmosphere is chilly, and the earth too damp to allow the delicate to venture abroad and tend the flowers out of doors. To those who are fond of flowers there is pleasure in watching the progress of the beautiful white fibres which descend from the bulbs into the water, tinged with the hue of purple or green,

which is reflected from the vase which contains them, and in watching the gradual expansion of the beautiful bells which crown the stem. The lament of Milton's Eve, when quitting the lovely bowers of the fairest garden which this world ever knew, accords well with female feelings generally on the subject of flowers. To a woman her flowers seem almost as her friends.

“ Must I then leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
Thee, native soil! these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of Gods! where I had hoped to spend
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow;
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening buds, and gave ye names:
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?”

Two species only of hyacinth, besides the native woodland flower, are reared in our gardens. The Oriental hyacinth has however many hundred varieties, distinguished chiefly by the various colours or forms of the flowers.

In the neighbourhoods of Aleppo and Bagdad, the Eastern hyacinth is very abundant, growing wild on the plains, and attracting by its beauty the notice of travellers. It is much valued throughout the East, and forms a conspicuous part in the bouquet destined to convey the sentiments of Oriental ladies. The language of flowers in the East seems to have been brought to a regular system, and each flower has a definite meaning; but unfortunately in Europe it is too vague, and too ill understood, to be by any means a safe medium of conveying any sentiment. Each person, in our country, has a system of his own, which, like many systems of short-hand writing, can be read but by him in whom it originates.

To Eastern poets the hyacinth presents a famous subject of simile. Hafiz compares his mistress's hair to the hyacinth, and hyacinthine locks, probably originally an Oriental comparison, have been long expressive of graceful tresses, because the petals of the hyacinth turn the points. This bending up of the tips

of the flower, is more apparent in the wood hyacinth, the poets' blue-bell, than in the garden flower.

The hyacinth is very common throughout Greece, and in some other warm climates of Europe; it blooms in the former country about February. The Dutch have taken much pains in its culture, and to them we owe the greater number of kinds of this flower. They are said to have had in Holland, in the year 1620, more than two thousand varieties of hyacinth, while in England, at this period, the flower was scarcely known.

For many years the hyacinth was only a single flower, but it is now an object with the florist to produce large double bells. Brilliance of tint is, however, the chief point aimed at in the culture of this flower.

It is remarkable how seldom in the dress of flowers we meet with any sombre colours. The few blossoms which are of a dull purple hue belong to poisonous plants; brown flowers are almost peculiar to night-scented plants, and

scarcely an instance occurs of a blossom approaching to black. The black hollyhocks and roses, of which we often hear, are in reality of a deep purplish red. A spot of almost pure black is seen in the midst of the white petals of the bean-flower, and was, by the ancients, believed to be worn as mourning, on account of the supposed pernicious effects of the bean.

The hyacinth is one of the few flowers which will bear the saline atmosphere. It seems also to grow quite as well with its root immersed in water as when fixed in the soil. Moisture being requisite for the growth and fertility of vegetation, it was formerly thought by many philosophers that vegetables derived their nutriment solely from water, and that the earth was merely useful to them as affording them the means of stability. Du Hamel, who advocated this opinion, raised several young trees by water alone. He even reared an oak to the age of eight years, when it died from some neglect; but as its roots were found at the time of its decay to be in a very unsound state, and it had

annually decreased in vigour for some years, the experiment has not been deemed favourable to his opinion.

Later experiments have proved that plants derive sustenance from the various ingredients which compose the soil, and also from the atmosphere; and that very few, except marine plants, and some bulbous-rooted flowers, as the hyacinth and lily, will vegetate, if wholly immersed in water.

When reared in sitting-rooms the hyacinth is often weakened by the plan of filling the glass with water, which renders the bulbs liable to decay. When first placed in the glass the water should not reach the bulbs by an inch or more, as the fibres will then touch the water without its coming in contact with the bulbous part. Hyacinth growers should prefer green or other dark coloured glasses to white ones, and place them in a damp dark situation, where the plant will have a tendency to strike out its roots before the stem and leaves are formed, and this will greatly promote its strength. When a number

of fibres are secured, the glass should be removed to the window. By carefully cutting through the root of the hyacinth lengthways, the flower, which was shortly to have sprung up above it, is found formed in minute beauty within the bulb. Montgomery alludes to a similar circumstance in the root of the tulip:

“ Here lies a bulb, the child of earth,
Buried alive beneath the clod,
Ere long to spring, by second birth,
A new and nobler work of God.

’Tis said, that microscopic power,
Might through his swaddling folds descry
The infant image of the flower,
Too exquisite to meet the eye.”

The ancient poets told that the hyacinth received its name from Apollo, who unfortunately killed his friend, the youth Hyacinth, and then turned him into a flower, that he might ever bathe in morning dews, and drink the pure air of heaven. He is said to have imprinted the expression of sorrow in black streaks upon the leaves of the flower. The

ancient festivals at Sparta, dedicated to Apollo, and termed Hyacinthus, were held in memory of this event, and were commemorated by two days of mirth and festivity, and one of mourning. Hyacinths are used in the Greek isles at weddings, and worn both by the bride and her attendant maidens.

The flowers mentioned by classical writers have been the subjects of many discussions, and as no marks are found, either on the flower or leaf of the plant termed in modern language hyacinth, several flowers have been mentioned by different authors as the hyacinth of the poets. It is now, however, generally believed, and Professor Martyn was fully of the opinion, that the ancient hyacinth was that red species of lily now called the Martagon lily, or Turk's-cap. Virgil describes the flower as of a bright red colour, and it was said to be marked with the Greek exclamation of grief, AI AI. The black marks of the Turk's-cap may, by a little help of the imagination, be considered to bear this inscription.

Milton, when enumerating the flowers which were to strew the bier of Lycidas, alludes to the ancient belief:

“ Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
 The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine,
 The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
 The glowing violet,
 The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
 With cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head,
 And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
 Bid amarantus all his beauty shed,
 And daffodilies fill their cups with tears,
 To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.”

Farther on he adds, in allusion to the hyacinth,

“ That sanguine flower inscribed with woe.”

We might look in vain for these wonderful initials, or any lines resembling them, on the foliage of our wood hyacinth, which is, from the absence of these marks, termed *Hyacinthus non scriptus* (not written). This flower is sometimes called wood-squill, but the French term it as we do, *Jacinte des bois*. Every wanderer in mead or woodland knows this simple flower.

It grows wild throughout Europe under every hedge, from that which skirts the vale of Avoca, where two waters meet, and in which Inglis found it in great beauty and luxuriance, to the most sequestered glade, untrodden by the traveller or the poet, and unhonoured by song or story. May is the month when its blue flowers swing before the breezes, and when crowds of gleeful children go out into the woods to gather it.

The hyacinth belongs to the order Asphodéleæ, which comprises a large number of beautiful garden flowers, and received its name from the asphodel. This plant is very common on the plains of Greece, and it was used by the ancient Greeks at funerals. The star of Bethlehem (Ornithógalum), which is a frequent garden ornament, is a plant of this order. From one species was obtained that ancient medicine the squill. Another species of this flower, the large star of Bethlehem (Ornithógalum majus), was formerly called the lily of Alexandria, and is often termed eleven o'clock

lady, because it opens at this hour. Its roots are nutritious, and are supposed by Linnæus to have been the dove's dung mentioned in Scripture, as the food of the famished Jews when Jerusalem was surrounded by the proud armies of Sennacherib. The musk or starch hyacinth is a well known plant of the order; it grows wild in many parts of England, and its dark purple bells have a strong odour of starch.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONVOLVULUS—EGLANTINE—CLIMBING PLANTS—PECU-
LIARITY OF TWINING PLANTS—LARGE WHITE BIND-
WEED—SMALLER BINDWEED—SEA-SIDE CONVULVULUS
—GARDEN CONVULVULUSES—SWEET POTATOE—DODDER
—PARASITIC PLANTS.

“On the hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish still,
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimmed the eglantine.”

—
Sir W. Scott.

FROM some other lines of Sir Walter Scott's, in which the lady is bidden to twine a wreath of eglantine for the brow, it is probable that he, in speaking of this plant, alludes to that luxuriant creeper the traveller's joy, or wild clematis, or virgin's bower, which is very commonly, though erroneously, termed eglantine. Milton

apparently calls the honeysuckle by this name,

“ Through the sweetbriar or the vine,
Or the *twisted* eglantine.”

The true eglantine of the older writers is, however, the prickly sweetbriar, which so often forms a hedge for our gardens, pouring upon the breeze the delicious odour that resides in the herbage as much as in the blossoms. It is the *Rósa rubiginósa* of modern botanists, and the *Rosa eglantéria* of the olden time. It is to this Shakspeare refers :

“ And leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander
Outsweeten'd not thy breath.”

Thus again, Spenser, in the *Fairy Queen*, describes a bower :

“ And over him, art striving to compare
With nature, did an arbour green dispreed,
Framed of wanton ivy, flow'ring fair,
Through which the fragrant eglantine did spread
His pricking arms, entrail'd with roses red,
Which dainty odours round about them threw,
And all within with flowers was garnished,
That when mild Zephyrus amongst them blew,
Did breathe out bounteous smells, and painted colours
shew.”

Spenser was very careful to preserve the old names of flowers, and he, as well as Shakespeare, calls the honeysuckle—our woodbine—by the name of caprifole. It is still called by botanists *caprifolium*.

Of all the flowers with which summer with a lavish hand graces our pastoral scenery, filling the air with fragrance and covering the earth with beauty, none are more generally attractive than the wild climbing plants of the hedges. They are most numerous towards the latter part of summer or the beginning of autumn. By interweaving their slender boughs, covered with foliage and flowers, or with berries no less beautiful, or, as in the wild clematis, crowned with their light and feathery seeds, they hang about the trees and bushes, and contribute very materially to that aspect of richness and beauty which the landscape presents at this part of the year. As the stems of these plants are so slender and yielding that they would sink under the weight of their flowery clusters, or their numerous leaves, or be shattered to pieces by the winds,

if they did not find support from other plants, we see them hanging by their tendrils, or bending their stems into the most graceful twinings, and clothing the trunks of aged trees—"those green-robed senators of mighty woods, tall oaks"—with an abundant verdure, the dark glossy green of which contrasts with their grey lichen-covered trunks, or with the brighter tints of that massy canopy which overhangs them.

It is very evident that the ascending position of the greater number of plants is necessary, both for their prosperity and the welfare of man and the lower animals. How soon would the profuseness of vegetation become a curse rather than a blessing, if it were not for the provisions made for this ascending direction! Were it not for this, the whole earth would be clogged with stems and foliage, and the industry of man could not effect a clearance for culture or pathway. At every step his foot would be entangled. Then indeed the woods would all be pathless, and the want of a free circulation of air would render the plants coarse and rank,

and destroy some of the most delicate among them. The vegetable matter would accumulate by their continual decay, and render the air impure; while, as in the jungles of hot countries, the noxious reptile would lurk there unseen, and the wild animal would there lie down in his lair.

One circumstance respecting twining plants is worthy of remark. Some of them follow the apparent course of the sun, and turn around the supporting stem, from left to right. This is the case with the common black bryony of our woods, which, with its shining heart-shaped leaves and small green flowers, may be seen in any wood during the summer months climbing over the trees. Other plants, as the large white bindweed or convolvulus, twine contrary to the sun, or from right to left. The peculiar tendency of the stem of every plant is always constant in each individual of the species. Thus a large bindweed, wherever found, always turns one way, and a plant of black bryony the other; we never see its position reversed. Even if the

gardener turn it in another direction, the plant, if unable to disengage itself and assume its natural bias, will eventually perish.

The large white bindweed (*Convolvulus sépium*) is termed by recent botanists *Calystégia sépium*. It is very common about rivers, streams, or other moist grounds, and is a very graceful plant. The large white bells, which are called by country people "old man's night-cap," are exceeded by no blossoms in whiteness of tint or beauty of outline; and the leaves, which are heart-shaped, are very handsome. It often creeps over the drooping willow tree, festooning it lightly with its large flowers, or it wanders over the green bank, or almost covers some little rill, so that the heedless traveller might plunge his foot unexpectedly into the midst of the hidden waters. It is, like the other species of wild convolvulus, very tenacious of life, and if it gets into the hedge of a garden, it costs the gardener considerable trouble in its eradication. Indeed, in some places, it seems almost impossible to get rid of

it; and summer after summer it unfolds its unwelcome blossoms, which are not less beautiful, though less rare, than many of the plants that are carefully nurtured in the enclosure. The root of the large bindweed, or bearbind, as it is often called, is said to have the same medicinal virtues as the scammony, which is procured from another species, and at a great expense, from abroad.

How often do we admire flowers for their novel rather than their beauty! Many a florist will exult in the acquirement of a plant from a distant country, which is neither remarkable for a lovely appearance or a sweet odour, while he will pass by the flowers of his native meadow—the wild thyme, or the briar rose—and call them weeds, and scarcely bestow a thought on their loveliness. Some of our countrymen who have visited the Cape of Good Hope, have recorded that upon their first arrival there, they have trodden with caution, lest they should destroy the bright geraniums or the beautiful heaths which are

so abundant in Southern Africa. And when they wandered into the country, and saw the new and bright flowers, how have they laden themselves and their companions with large branches covered with wild blossoms; and knowing that their lustre was unrivalled by those of European origin, they have wondered much that the settlers should wholly neglect them, while they cultivated with care the plants reared from seeds which had been brought from the different countries of Europe. Thus the hollyhocks, the tulips, hyacinths, and other flowers, engage the whole attention; while not one of all the large tribe of magnificent heaths is admitted into a garden of the colonist, or has received so much of his notice as even to have acquired an individual name; this whole family of plants being included in the general name of bushes. Yet even with our countrymen, after a while, the Cape flowers were regarded as common, and admiration was shortly bestowed upon some paler beauty of more northern regions and cloudy skies, which, commonly

as it might have grown around their former homes, had now attained to the value of an exotic.

Not less frequent a flower than the large bindweed, and adding to its beauty the charm of a sweet fragrance, is the small pink field convolvulus (*Convolvulus arvensis*). Who ever trod the grassy plain on a summer's day, and did not find it wreathing the grass at his feet, and yielding so sweet a perfume that he might have thought an almond tree 'in full blossom must be somewhere near his path? The very meadow grass is entwined by it; but when it creeps into the corn-field, and its tiny stem encircles the corn, its fairy wreath is an annoyance to the farmer, for he knows it will injure the produce of his field. Its slender white roots can live best on driest soils, and difficult indeed it is to expel it when once it enters the cultivated land. This flower has, in common with the pimpernel and many others, the property of closing up previous to rain. Indeed all plants of the convolvulus family rejoice in the sun-

shine, and several of their blossoms do not display their beauty after noon.

One other kind only can be reckoned among our wild convolvuluses. This is the sea-side bindweed (*Calystégia soldanella*), a larger flower than the field species, of a rose colour, somewhat tinged with purple, and having yellow plaits. Its stems run along the sandy shore, but do not ascend, although they entwine about anything near them. These plants are all in blossom during the months of June, July, and August.

These flowers receive their English name of bindweed from their propensity to cling to other plants; and the Latin name has the same signification, being formed from *convolo*, to entwine.

If we turn to our gardens, we shall there find several species of convolvulus. The most common is that usually termed minor convolvulus (*Convólulus tricolor*). The bright blue flowers of this plant, rayed with white, form an excellent border ornament; for though the blossoms are frail, there is so great a profusion of them. that they, in succession, present a

blooming plant during two or three months, commencing with July. This flower closes at four o'clock, and obeys this law of its nature, whether it is blossoming on its bed, or is forming a parlour ornament among the gathered bouquet of the vase. The tricoloured convolvulus is a native of Southern Europe, and was introduced into our gardens two centuries since. It requires little care, and its colour and form alike render it a favourite flower.

In the warm countries of Europe it often grows on hilly situations; and it is described as flourishing profusely on the top of a very high hill in the neighbourhood of Lisbon.

In the country in the suburbs of Rome, where many very handsome and fragrant wild flowers attain great luxuriance, different species of convolvulus are very numerous in the hedges, and offer a great variety of colour. In some parts they completely cover the hedges with their leaves and blossoms, adorning both sides of the high roads for several miles. The Italians also plant them as ornaments to their verandahs.

The elegant taste of the natives of Italy leads them to admire flowers; but their national antipathy to perfumes prevents the admission of odorous plants in their dwellings, and excludes many from their gardens. It is singular that the descendants of the Romans — a people so lavish in their use of fragrant flowers and perfumes — should now be so annoyed by their presence. Yet so great is the disgust excited in modern Italian ladies by their scents, that even the sight of an artificial rose, by merely recalling the remembrance of its natural perfume, will cause many to faint. When Mrs. Piozzi was in Italy, she paid a visit to some Roman ladies with some perfumed powder in her hair. To her great surprise and vexation, she found herself an object of universal remark, and plainly saw that she was avoided by the company. Servants brought in rue on salvers, which the ladies smelt, and Mrs. Piozzi, having ascertained the cause of this conduct, left the party, which no entreaties could ever again induce her to join. One would have supposed

that a national antipathy might have served as an excuse for the aversion of the Roman ladies, but Mrs. Piozzi had a prejudice against prejudices. The large wild convolvuluses which entwine the hedges of Italy, may gain their due admiration, since they are chiefly scentless; but the jessamine and rose, which flourish so well under an Italian sky, and which we prize so highly, are, notwithstanding their beauty, rather offensive than pleasing.

The great number of garden species of convolvulus renders it useless to particularize them all. The scammony of the druggists — a gum-resin much employed in medicine — is obtained from the roots of a species of this plant growing wild in countries bordering the Mediterranean. The *Convolvulus scammonia* has flowers of a yellow colour. The *Convolvulus batáta*, or sweet potato plant, is interesting, as its root is the potato of Shakspeare and the earlier writers. The common potato (*Solánum tuberosum*) is thought to have been introduced into England by the unfortunate Sir Walter Raleigh.

Owing to a prejudice which existed against it, it was not, for many years afterwards, used as an article of general consumption. This arose from the circumstance that the potato belongs to a highly poisonous class of plants, of which the common nightshade is an example. The potato indeed contains poison, which is subdued by boiling, but Linnæus always denounced it as unwholesome.

The batata, or sweet potato, was highly extolled for its restorative virtues, and it was thought to have so much power in repairing decayed constitutions, as to have been almost a specific for the infirmities of old age.

The potato convovulus is a trailing plant, bearing purple blossoms and angular leaves. It is now often reared in gardens, as an ornament. At every joint of its long stem it sends forth a tuber. These tubers are very numerous upon the plant, and as, in their native soil, they are so easily propagated, they form an important article of food to the natives of warm countries. They are much used for the table in Spain and

Portugal, and are annually exported from those countries into England.

The batata was introduced into this country by Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins; and great numbers of the roots were brought hither for many years succeeding its introduction. The potato of present use being, however, better adapted to general culture in this climate, it has superseded the use of the sweet potato, and that plant is but little valued amongst us, except as a curiosity, though still much in request in the southern parts of Europe, and an object of general culture in tropical countries.

The very beautiful climbing garden plants, whose plaits of pink or blue vary with the purple or white colours of their flowers, and which are usually termed major convolvuluses, are more correctly called *Ipomaëa*. Many kinds of this plant throw their bells about the verandah, or over the summer bower of the garden, or they hang down amid the foliage of the tree round which they have been trained. Almost all the species of this graceful flower

are natives of North or South America, or of the East or West Indies. They are abundant in the Canadian forests, festooning the very summits of their tall trees, and growing on flexile stems a hundred feet in length. The Canadians call them "morning gloves," because they display most of their beauty in the early part of the day. Several of the less hardy species require, in our country, the protection of the hot-house.

The tuberous-rooted *Ipomaea* is, in Jamaica, an evergreen plant, and frequently trained over lattice work. It is said that it may be carried over an arbour of three hundred feet in length, and as its leaves and flowers are very abundant, and the latter delightfully odoriferous, it is a useful plant in a country where shade is always welcome, and it forms a frequent part of the garden arrangement.

The convolvulus order (*Convolvulaceæ*) contains a few other genera of plants besides the convolvulus, but they are, with few exceptions, all climbing plants, and are mostly distinguished

by their plaited blossoms. Some of them are found occupying every variety of soil and climate, but they are far more abundant in the torrid zone, and in warm than in cold climates. The roots of many convolvuluses contain an acrid milky fluid. The medicinal jalap is procured from the *Convólulus jálapa*.

A very common plant belonging to this order is the dodder of our heaths. This plant creeps over the yellow gorse bush in great quantity. Its small pink blossoms are situated on leafless stems, which wind among the prickly bushes, or entwine the nettles so closely that it is impossible to separate them. This is one of the few truly parasitic plants indigenous to our country. The only other true wild parasites are the mistletoe and the purple broom-rape, which grows upon broom or nettles, or even derives its nutriment from the clover. A purplish coloured flower, with broad leaves — the toothwort — is, by some botanists, considered parasitic. The convolvulus, the honeysuckle, and other creeping plants, are sometimes incorrectly

termed parasites; but as their roots are in the ground, and are not nourished by the plant on which they lean for support, they are merely creepers, and are what botanists term epiphytes, or false parasites. The ferns, mosses, and other plants which derive nutriment from the air, are also epiphytal.

All kinds of creeping plants, both those which are parasitic, and those which are not, are more frequent in warm countries than in our climate.

CHAPTER XIX.

HENNA — GARDENS IN THE EAST — USES OF HENNA IN
EASTERN COUNTRIES — GARDEN BALSAM — PURPLE
LOOSESTRIFE—BLACK SALTWORT—VERSES.

“ No tree that is of count in greenwood growes,
From lowest juniper to cedar tall ;
No floure in fielde, that dainty odour throwes,
And decks his branch with blossoms over all,
But there was planted or grew naturall.”

Spenser.

HOWEVER great may be the pleasure which the inhabitants of temperate climates derive from the possession of a garden near their own homes, the delight which it affords those who live in the warmer climates of the world can perhaps hardly be imagined by any who have not felt the heat of a tropical sun, or the sultry air of the interior of an Eastern dwelling.

As a shelter from the excessive heat of the climate, a garden combining both shade and

water, becomes almost necessary to the European who has left his own country for a residence in India; while the rich natives of hot climates are remarkable for their love of these retreats, where they may luxuriate in that dreamy idleness so delicious to the Oriental, and something of which we experience in England, on the noontide of a warm summer's day.

The Eastern gardens are filled with umbrageous evergreen trees, and with a great variety of the brightest tinted flowers, whose lustre would be impaired by transplantation to our uncongenial clime. The growth of vegetation is in warm countries so profuse and rapid, that the beauty of these gardens may be constantly maintained at the expense of comparatively little trouble.

It is not unfrequent that these spots, which nature and art have combined to embellish, are distinguished by some appellation that conveys an idea of the value attached to them by their owners. The royal garden of an Eastern prince is called the Garden of God,—a name

which is supposed by some to refer to the garden of Eden; and a promise adapted to the idea of enjoyment, which the imagination of an Oriental would form, is given by the Koran to the faithful follower of the Prophet: "Good tidings unto you this day, gardens through which rivers flow, ye shall remain therein for ever."

But it would not be enough that these enclosures should exhibit plants remarkable for beauty only. The inhabitants of those countries whose flowers distil sweet odours, and whose trees drop aromatic gums, are fond of a great degree of fragrance. It enters into every reference of their poets, and a poem which, like the Song of Solomon, should abound in such allusions, would be well adapted to the taste of the people of the East; for there are still prized the "spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of waters, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon."

Throughout Egypt, India, Persia, Arabia, and Greece, the henna or al'hinna plant (*Lawsonia inermis*), is a shrub in universal estimation for its beauty, and the sweet perfume it exhales. Its leaves, which are oval, are of a remarkably bright green, and the flowers of a purplish or lilac colour. "The Egyptian privet or henna," says Mr. Lane, "is pronounced more excellent than the rose. Mohammed, speaking of this flower, said, 'the chief of the sweet-scented flowers of this world, and of the next, is the faghiyeh, and this was his favourite flower.'" "I approve of his taste," adds that gentleman, "for this flower, which grows in clusters, somewhat like the lilac, has most delicious fragrance."

The henna generally constitutes a considerable portion of the hedges which surround the favourite garden, while over it, with many other flowers, creeps the lovely Arabian jessamine, the long stems of which are perforated to make the sticks of the Turkish pipes. Sometimes the
grows on the hills of the Greek isles,

pouring its sweetness on the vales beneath. Its blossoms, when gathered, form the favourite bouquet of the Grecian females, who delight peculiarly in flowers, and wear them in profusion about their persons.

The Greeks call this plant *kupros*, but its most frequent Indian name is mendey. It is generally believed to be the plant which was by the ancient Hebrews termed kopher, and which is, in the Song of Solomon, called camphire.

Three species of henna are to be found in England, and the plant is not very difficult to cultivate in our climate.

It is one of the employments of the females of those countries in which henna is valued, to impart to their nails a pink dye, obtained from the dried leaves of the plant. They also use it to give this colour to the soles of their feet and the palms of their hands. Moore alludes to this :

“ Thus some bring leaves of henna to imbue
The fingers' ends of a bright roseate hue,
So bright, that in the mirror's depth they seem
Like tips of coral branches in the stream.”

The Oriental ladies also deck their sofas and adorn their houses with the rich blossoms of the henna. The dried leaves are preserved as a scent, and an extract prepared from them is used on visits and festive occasions, and profusely employed in their religious ceremonies.

The Hindoo maiden assumes the red dye to her nails as soon as she is betrothed, which is generally at a very early age. The practice of using this dye appears to be very ancient, from the circumstance that the mummies of Egypt—those gloomy-looking remains of past generations—have often their nails covered with the red paste of the henna.

This plant is also of extensive use in Eastern manufactures, being employed for dyeing maroquins of a reddish yellow colour.

One species of the balsam, which we cultivate as an annual, is used in the East in the same way as the henna, for dyeing the nails.

The aged Mahometan frequently perfumes his beard by holding his face over the vapour arising from a preparation of the odoriferous

henna. This reminds us of that perfume which, poured upon Aaron's beard, was, in its sweetness, compared by the Psalmist to the delights of fraternal affection. In Egypt the henna flowers are carried about the streets for sale, and the seller, as he proceeds, calls aloud, "O, odours of Paradise; O, flowers of the henna!"

This plant receives its botanical name from Dr. Isaac Lawson. It is similar in its nature to our common loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), and placed by botanists in the same order, *Salicariæ*. The flowers of this order are, like the henna, almost all of a purplish or red colour. Our purple loosestrife is very common by streams, and is a conspicuous and handsome flower, yet few country people know its name. Villagers have almost always familiar names for common plants, and these are often different in different counties. Sometimes names of the old poets, names almost forgotten, are still retained in the country, and may be learned by conversing with some of those old village dames who go about collecting "simples," as they call

herbs which they use for remedies. The flower called loosestrife is two or three feet high, and at the top of the stem bears a number of flowers placed round it; the leaves are long, but shaped at the base like a heart. If the reader find a flower answering this description by the stream side, and take the trouble to count the chives or threads which are within the purple blossom, he cannot mistake it. It has six long and six short stamens.

VERSES.

It was at evening's silent hour,
A gentle maid reclined
In a lone spot, where tree and flower
Bent to the summer wind;
A volume lay within her hand,
O'er which she fondly bent,
And on a scene of distant land
Her thought was all intent;
And now and then the maiden smiled,
As that sweet scene her thoughts beguiled.

She read of isles renowned in song,
Of skies of cloudless blue,
And flowery plains, which all year long
Wore tints of brightest hue;

Of vine-clad groves, and myrtle shade,
And hills with verdure clad,
Where rose and henna ever made
The fragrant earth seem glad ;
And as she read, the dreamer fair
Sate wishing that her home was there.

But what has bid the colour rise
Unto that maiden's brow ?
And what has dimmed those gentle eyes
That were so laughing now ?
Alas ! the pleasant tale has changed ;
She reads of woe and pain,
Of exile from his land estranged,
Of youth and maiden slain,
And dying children on the strand,
Oh, where is home in that bright land ?

Thine may not be a land of flowers,
Thou simple English maid ;
Its azure skies, its sunny hours,
Soon change to clouds and shade :
But fearlessly, o'er mead or hill,
Thy footsteps lone may tread,
And thou may'st seek the wood-flower still,
Upon its native bed,—
No warrior's arm, no despot's breath,
Dooms thee to wretchedness or death.

Thy winter fire burns bright and high
 Upon the cheerful hearth;
The laugh is echoed merrily,
 The song of household mirth:
Thy mother clasps her infant there,
 And smiles his mirth to see;
Thy father's heart knows not a care
 Lest war should check thy glee;
But calmly eyes his happy band,
And triumphs in his native land.

O Nature, fitted as thou art
 To solace and to bliss,
Not e'en thy charms can win the heart
 Like social happiness!
And happier far our native isle,
 With all its change and gloom,
Than lands, where 'mid thy brightest smile,
 There dwells no sacred home;
And better still our social ties,
Than flowery plains and cloudless skies!

A. P.

CHAPTER XX.

ORCHIS — BEE-OPHRYS — FLY-OPHRYS — MAN-ORCHIS —
PURPLE ORCHIS—SALEP—CLIMBING ORCHISES—BUT-
TERFLY ORCHIS—EPIDENDRUM—AIR ORCHIS—ORCHI-
DEOUS PLANTS.

“ Where Java’s isle, horizon’d with the floods,
Lifts to the skies her canopy of woods,
Pleased Epidendra climbs the waving pines,
And high in heaven the intrepid beauty shines,
Gives to the Tropic breeze her radiant hair,
Drinks the bright shower, and feeds upon the air ;
Her brood delighted stretch their callow wings,
As poised aloft their pendant cradle swings,
Eye the warm sun, the spicy zephyr breathe,
And gaze unenvious on the world beneath.”

Darwin.

THE adherence of plants to their own particu-
lar circumstances of soil and situation, is rather
remarkably seen in those singularly formed
flowers. the bee and fly orchis. Neither of
these plants grows in Scotland, although on
calcareous hills and plains of England, they

are sometimes numerous, seldom collected into groups, but scattered far and wide about the landscape. There are, however, many districts in England which possess situations that might have been supposed favourable to their growth, where they cannot be found; or where, when met with, they are so rare as to be regarded as peculiar curiosities.

There is something so singular in the appearance of an insect resting upon a stem, as represented by the form and colours of a flower, that few plants, which do not by their utility appeal to our gratification, excite more general interest than these. It is not unusual, in towns contiguous to chalky hills, to see them exposed for sale, and to hear in early morning, the cry of invitation to the purchaser, sounded by the countryman, who has arisen with the dawn to procure them, and brought them some miles for the inspection of the curious, before the townspeople have awaked from their slumbers, or have yet bethought them that "truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes
to hold the sun."

The basket containing these floral curiosities is sometimes half filled with bluebells, sweet woodruff, and other wild flowers, besides the plants which are familiarly termed man-orchis, butterfly-orchis, lizard and spider orchis, and all the many richly-coloured orchises with which the meadows and woods abound. And if none of these flowers can yield us the powerful odours of those which are transplanted from afar, yet is their scent so redolent of the country, and so fresh and rural are their looks, that they to whom the wide extent of the unwall'd meadow, or the steep ascent of the wooded hill, or the long and free meandering of the stream, or the glen, whose loneliness is not interrupted even by a cottage, are dearer and lovelier than even the well-enclosed and nurtured garden-ground, are apt, upon seeing these flowers, to draw comparisons by no means favourable to the tulips, and carnations, and picotees. Many true lovers of the country can say with Mrs. Howitt,

“ And hyacinth-like orchises
Are very dear to me.”

The flowers of the above mentioned woods are
 very beautiful, and are very something like
 those of the *Phlox paniculata*, as they
 are very large, and are in some way
 very similar to those of the *Phlox* which
 are of the same colour. The flowers would not, in
 appearance, be at all so resembling to
 those of the *Phlox* which they are designated, as
 they are very bright; and their remarkable
 colour would bid us pause in our
 search for a insect from the flower, and
 withdraw from its approach.
 The above mentioned native species, almost
 all of which are very bright.

The *Phlox paniculata* (L.) is sometimes
 found in the woods, and grows near woods,
 and in places where the soil is calcareous,
 and is very similar to the rich brown and
 red flowers of the *Phlox* which under the velvet coat
 of the leaves, and in fine plants the flower
 is very bright. The insect. The delicate
 flowers of the *Phlox* are very similar to



The common orchises of our woods are, as Mrs. Howitt describes them, something like hyacinths in their general appearance; as the flowers grow down the stem, in the same way as the bluebell, but their leaves are much broader, and they are of pinkish lilac colour. The observer of the orchis plants would not, in several instances, detect their resemblance to the objects from which they are designated, as it is often very slight; and that remarkable similarity, which might bid us pause in our progress to seize the insect from the flower, and wonder it did not withdraw from the approaching hand, is, among our native species, almost peculiar to the bee and fly orchis.

The bee-orchis (*Ophrys apifera*) is sometimes found in chalk pits, and it grows near woods, or in other shady places where the soil is calcareous. It is marked with the rich brown and yellow hues which embroider the velvety coat of the humble-bee, and in fine plants the flower is almost as large as that insect. The delicate lilac petals of this blossom are very similar to



The numerous orchids of our woods are, as a rule, like the *phryas*, something like *phryas* in their general appearance; as the flowers grow down the stem, in the same way as the *phryas*, but their leaves are much broader, and they are of pinkish lilac colour. The observer of the orchis plants would not, in several instances, detect their resemblance to the *phryas* from which they are designated, as the difference is very slight; and that remarkable peculiarity which might bid us pause in our endeavours to separate the insect from the flower, and which causes the insect not to withdraw from the approaching hand, is common among our native species, almost to the exclusion of the *phryas* and fly orchis.

The *phryas* (*phryas apifera*) is sometimes distinguished by its leaves, and it grows near woods, or in other places where the soil is calcareous. It is marked with the rich brown and yellow lines which embroider the velvety coat of the humble-bee, and in fine plants the flower is almost as large as that insect. The delicate and elegant petals of this blossom are very similar to



gauzy wings expanded ready for flight. Its leaves are glossy and of a pale green colour, but by the time the flower is quite blown, they are generally much eaten by insects.

The fly-orchis (*Ophrys muscifera*) is plentiful in some of the southern counties of England, the plant generally preferring the vicinity of a hedge or bush. It would immediately suggest the idea of a fly, of a bluish-coloured body, settling on a stem; and two small coloured threads, situated towards the upper end of the flower, are so fine as greatly to resemble the delicate antennæ of some of those joyous little creatures which are ever dancing about in the sunbeam, revelling among the flowers of the bank, or the sedges of the pool side. These two kinds of ophrys flower about the latter end of June.

Let not the reader imagine that in our wild plant, the man-orchis (*Aceras anthropophora*), he shall discover any striking resemblance to the human frame. There is indeed something like a helmet-covered head, and the small linear portions of the flower have, by the fanciful,

been thought like the limbs of the human body; yet perhaps it is not attributing too much to the imagination of him who first named it, to say, that nineteen persons out of twenty would never detect the similarity. This orchis has not the gay colours of many blossoms of the family, but is of a yellowish green colour. It is about a foot high, and in flower during June. It will flourish on no soil of which chalk or clay is not the chief ingredient.

Our most common kinds of orchis plant may be found in almost every wood or on every hedgerow. It would not be difficult for any one who walks into the country in spring, to find the early purple orchis (*Orchis máscula*). The flowers are of a deep lilac colour, sometimes very odoriferous, and the broad shining leaves are generally thickly spotted with purple. From this plant has been derived the salep of commerce.

Salep is a farinaceous substance, made from the roots of several kinds of orchis, and chiefly imported into this country from the south of

Europe, where fields of these plants are cultivated for the purpose of procuring it. The same substance, not at all inferior in value to the foreign produce, has been obtained from the orchis root of our meadow, and it is to be regretted that its culture is not attempted in England.

The roots of all European orchises consist of two knobs, which are either of a globular form, or like that of the purple orchis, palmate (shaped like the hand). On one of these bulbs is produced the flower of the summer; and this dying away towards the decline of the year, the other remains to bear the blossom of the succeeding vernal season: while, in the meantime, a third bulb is formed on the side opposite to the decayed knob. In consequence of this mode of growth, the plant advances every year about half-an-inch from its original position, and will, of course, in a number of years, if undisturbed, have made a considerable progress over a meadow bank or other plot of ground. Children in the country, who have detected this move-

ment by watching some favourite root, call the orchises walking plants. A somewhat similar structure of the root accounts for the movements of some plants in our gardens, which, in the course of a few successive seasons, vary their places of growth.

There is no substance of the same bulk which contains so great a portion of nutriment as salep, and it has on this account been recommended as a valuable addition to the store of vessels designed for long voyages. Several medical men have urged its more frequent use. When dissolved in boiling water it forms a rich jelly, which not only affords a nourishing diet, but is an excellent preventive of the complaints most likely to arise from sea voyages. One ounce, mixed with two quarts of hot water, will furnish a sufficient quantity of soup for a man's daily consumption.

Salep is in many warm climates much used as food. The Turks employ it at every meal. The Eastern mode of preparing it is by washing the roots of the several kinds of orchis, and the

skin being thus removed, they are hung in the sun to dry. This process of preparation much diminishes the size of the knobs, which when brought into England are not larger than a walnut. This root is pulverized and sold as salep.

The wild orchises of Great Britain all grow in the ground ; but in the Tropics, orchis plants grow on trees, forming some of the most elegant floral appendages of the boughs of the damp forests of South America. Though they grow from the branches and stems of other plants, they are not strictly parasitic, as they do not weaken the tree on which they hang by nourishing themselves upon its juices ; but deriving their sustenance either from the soil lying about their bases, or among their branches, or by insinuating their fibrous roots into the bark, they acquire support, and are fed by the damp atmosphere about them, like the mosses of our own land.

So immense is the number of plants which there hang among the trees, and so closely are

the trees placed together, "that," says Baron Humboldt, "were it not for intervening rivers, the monkeys, almost the sole inhabitants of these regions, might pass along the tops of the trees for several hundred miles together without touching the earth."

The orchises of the tropics, although in their general appearance like those of our own land, are not in any of their species exactly like them. Those which resemble insects are much more numerous than ours. The beautiful butterfly-plant of Trinidad has large red and yellow blossoms, which, as they wave about in the air, resemble some of our gaudiest butterflies; and one tropical species is so like one of those elegant lizards which are found in hot countries, that even those who have often seen it are again and again deceived by it.

Our hothouses often display the beautiful tribe of epidendrums, hanging merely from a tuft of moss, and receiving their aliment from the warm moist air; and nature does not offer to the florist a more beautiful production than

the air-orchis, which, if hung up in a room, will continue to unfold, for several successive weeks, its fragrant and delicate flowers. It is a native of the East, and is peculiarly beautiful in China; but it does not attain perfection in this country.

The orchideous plants (Orchidæ) are very similar in the structure of their flowers, and easily known by a person acquainted with any one plant of the tribe. They are found in all parts of the world, except those bordering on the Frozen Zone. The elegant perfume of Vanilla is extracted from one of them. They are, however, generally rather an ornamental than useful tribe of plants; and we may infer that they have been scattered over the world, by the great Creator, chiefly for the purpose of affording delight to the eye of man, or of supplying food to the bee and butterfly, and other free creatures of the air, to whom God giveth their meat in due season.

CHAPTER XXI.

BELL-FLOWERS—HEATH-LAND—HEATH FLOWERS—HARE-BELL — DIFFERENT FORMS OF LEAVES ON THE SAME PLANT—NETTLE-LEAVED BELL-FLOWER—GIANT BELL-FLOWER — RAMPION — PYRAMIDAL BELL-FLOWER — VENUS'S LOOKING-GLASS.

Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright beaming summers exalt the perfume,
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green bracken,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom :

Far dearer to me yon humble broom bowers,
Where the bluebell and gowan lurk lowly unseen ;
For there, lightly tripping among the wild flowers,
A listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

Burns.

THE zephyrs are sporting with the flowers on the heath land, and that wide tract which, during a great part of the year, is remarkable for its waste and barren appearance, is richly clothed,

during summer, with its own peculiar blossoms. The loneliness often experienced by those who have to traverse a portion of heath ground, where no tree or hedge—perhaps not even a solitary cottage—serves as a landmark to the wanderer, has led us to think of the heath as a cheerless spot. Oftentimes, however, its wide carpet presents a scene of wild and rich beauty, and the purplish-red colour of the bells of the heather, and the sweet perfume of the golden furze and broom, and other flowers, and the constant humming of the wild bees, which, so long as the sky is unclouded, are hovering in swarms about it, delight the senses of those who, amid the scenes of nature, have an eye to mark, an ear to listen, and a heart to love.

The pretty low-branched shrub, the common ling, is bright with its reddish flowers, and so plentiful are they, that the Icelander would say they threatened a severe winter. The purple or rose-coloured blossoms of our native heaths are growing too in large and thickly-clustered patches. The name of the former plant—ling

(Callúna) is derived from the Greek word to cleanse or adorn ; whether because it causes the wilderness to blossom, or that because, as Sir J. E. Smith observes, it merits that title from the domestic uses to which it is applied where its twigs are manufactured into brooms. Professor Hooker says of it, that it makes an excellent edging to garden plots, and will bear clipping as well as box.

But we do not, in the southern parts of Great Britain, witness the beauties which tracts of heath-land present in the northern portion of our island, nor the services they render to those who inhabit their neighbourhood. The Highlanders make their beds of the green or dried heather, and the hardy and simple mode of life of these mountaineers, and their constant exposure to the free and invigorating air of their native hills, render their couch a more certain place of repose than is the curtained down of the luxurious.

How little do they who, rising at noon-time, spend the day in listless indolence, or in the

frivolous pursuits of fashion, know how many of the charms of existence are lost to them! To them the wide-stretching landscape, the lone walk along the meadow or river-side, offer no delight. They are unenlivened by all those "skyey influences" which can raise the spirits to an overflow of exhilaration, and give a corresponding spring to the untiring footstep. The odour of the wild, if it greet their languid senses, needs the stimulus of greater fragrance, and equals not in their esteem the odour of the perfume which is borne to them from the vase of the distiller. Weary they are, yet they do not experience the fatigue induced by exertion, which makes the hardest bed agreeable and refreshing, and invites to a light slumber, unscared by the visitations of restlessness or terror. They lose in early life that freshness and vigour of feeling which a constant intercourse with nature serves to continue; they cannot taste the chief delights of poetry; they miss the music of many voices, and pass away life unconscious of the common sources of

enjoyment which it offers to those of simple tastes and energetic habits.

“ Trees, and flowers, and streams,
Are social and benevolent, and he
Who oft communeth in their language pure,
Roaming among them at the close of day,
Shall find, like him who Eden's garden drest,
His Maker there to teach his listening heart.”

The Highlanders use the heather as a thatch for their cottages, dye their cloth of a yellow or orange colour with an infusion made from the young shoots, and make their ale by substituting it in part for hops; and almost useless as we deem the heather for any other purpose than to feed the bee or to enliven the moorland, to them this plant is invaluable.

But the heath-land in summer is decked with other blossoms besides those to which we have adverted. Several kinds of St. John's-wort there expand their yellow flowers; the golden-rod is a bright and frequent adornment; some kinds of trefoil grow better there than in any other place; and that flower — the peculiar

favourite of poets, — that flower which the Scotchman deems especially his own, — that dweller on heath and moorland—the harebell, raises its delicate stem, and bows its gentle head, neither proudly defiant of storm, nor easily broken by its violence. Like the elastic spirit of some gentle woman, strong by its very weakness, trembling before the tempest, but quickly after rising all fresh and vigorous, as if nought but sun and smiles had ever beamed upon it.

The harebell (*Campánula rotundifolia*) is among the most slender and delicately formed of our wild plants. Its azure bell hangs lightly upon its stem, and has a look so frail that one might think that the first wind would break it to pieces; yet is the structure of this little summer flower, though destined for a few days only, planned with the same exquisite care and skill of arrangement as is the lofty beech-tree, under whose branches the child seeks for the beech-nuts, and looks up to its canopy long years afterwards, and sees it yet in youthful vigour.

Many who have gathered the harebell, and marked it as it grew, may wonder that it should be termed specifically the round-leaved bell (*rotundifolia*), since the leaves are long and slender like those of the grasses. If, however, we observe the plant during the early stage of its progress, we may see, around the base of its stem, several leaves of a roundish shape, but these wither at an early period of its growth. It is not uncommon for the leaves of plants to vary considerably in shape, according as their position on the plant is around the stem, or near the root; indeed, when plants have leaves arising immediately from the root, it is more usual to find them different from those on the stem, than to find them formed alike. In some plants the leaves on different branches are dissimilar in shape, as may be seen in the ivy, some of whose leaves are quite uncut, while others are very deeply lobed.

The harebell is in flower from July until September, and not only lends its grace to the heathy tract of land, but grows upon the hedge-

bank of the meadow, or by the side of the full embowered wood, or the green lane.

Several other species of bell-flower are found in hedges and fields. The common nettle-leaved bell-flower—"Canterbury-bell," as it is often called—is most frequent in hedges and thickets. It formerly bore the name of "fayre in sight." It is a large and handsome plant, and is easily distinguished by the form of its leaves, which resemble those of the common nettle. Its bells are generally of a deep purple, and very large. It was called Canterbury-bell, because it was once more common in the neighbourhood of that city than elsewhere.

But the most showy native flower of this kind is the giant bell-flower. It is, however, very rare. It has larger flowers than the last-named species, and grows in moist and shady places.

There is one kind which somewhat resembles the harebell, except that its tint is much deeper; this is the spreading bell-flower, its blossoms are also generally larger than that of the favourite

flower. There are ten species of wild bell-flower, but it would not be easy to give a description of them all which could be understood by any but a botanist. One kind, however, may be easily known, as it is much smaller than any other. This is the elegant little ivy-leaved bell-flower. It grows in small tufts, its stems not so high as the common grass of the meadow, and the beautiful bell so small that a fly could scarcely shelter itself from the rain beneath its dome. It well deserves culture in a garden. It is rare in most counties of England.

One of our native species of bell-flower, the rampion, was formerly much cultivated in kitchen gardens for a table vegetable. Its roots are called ramps, and were eaten uncooked. The flower has purple bells, and grows about three feet high. It is peculiar to gravelly districts. Its leaves were eaten as salad, and the plant is still cultivated in the northern countries of Europe, as well as in France, for this purpose.

The roots of any of these bell-flowers may be safely eaten, but the great attention which has been paid during late years to edible plants and the introduction of many from foreign countries, have rendered the rampion of comparatively little value in the present day. It is, however, but a few centuries back, when salad herbs were scarcely cultivated in England. Even when Henry VIII. wanted a salad for his queen Catherine, he was obliged to send to Flanders to get it. Like the rampion, many wild plants afford good culinary vegetables, to those who cannot procure the produce of the garden. Thus the tops of the wild hop and the stalks of the common burdock are excellent substitutes for asparagus. The burdock is the plant which furnishes the burs that so amuse children, and it may easily be known by its purple thistle-shaped flowers, and its very large leaves. It is very common in hedges and waste places. Those who live by the sea-side, may use for the same purpose the stems of the sea-holly, and Linnæus considered it quite as good

as the cultivated asparagus. In such situations, too, the sea-kale may be procured, which is one of the wild plants most recommended for cooking, and which makes an excellent dish.

Even the common chickweed and the nettle are very good and wholesome, when boiled, and we may, on any summer day, gather a good salad in the fields. The dandelion leaves are much eaten on the Continent, and the large leaves of the milk thistle, when stripped of their prickles, are fit for any table. The latter plant may always be known by its large green leaves, covered with broad and numerous white streaks or veins. Then there are the watercresses of the streams, and the wood-sorrel; the leaves of the cardamine, or cuckoo-flower, which is the companion of the wood anemone in the spring; and the young shoots of yarrow, or old man's pepper, as it used to be called, because it was formerly used to correct the coldness of uncooked vegetables. This latter plant is, however, less agreeable to the palate than the others here mentioned, and instead of it may be recom-

mended the brooklime, which grows by the stream, and has blue flowers, and notched succulent leaves. This vegetable is sold in the markets of Scotland, and termed water-purple.

The wild flowers which enamel the meadows might often be made of much use to the cottager, if those who have the means of knowing their value would point it out to the un-instructed. Several roots may be boiled as potatoes, and are as wholesome, though not so large as this root; and many a poor family in the country might be more comfortably and nutritively fed, were the practice of using them more general. Thus the roots of the wild succory is thus used, and sold in the markets of France; those of the water arrow-head are equally nutritious; and this plant may be distinguished from the other ornaments of our pools by its large leaves, shaped like the point of an arrow, and its white flowers. The roots of the purple meadow orchis, as well as several others, contain, when boiled, far more nutriment than the potato. The little buds of the marsh-

marigold (a water-side plant, like a large buttercup) make good capers; and of the samphire and glasswort of our salt marshes, may be made a pickle which is esteemed even at the rich man's table.

The garden species of *campanula*, or bell-flower, are very ornamental. The large pyramidal bell-flower (*Campánula pyramidális*) whose numerous blossoms are often trained across a widely-extended frame, and serve so admirably to stand as a shade in the window-seat, are not so much admired as they were some years since; for fashion has great influence over garden flowers, promoting one and lowering another according to her dictates. The bright blue flowers of this plant compensate for the artificial appearance which a plant reared in this position must necessarily present, and the change of taste in England has not affected its frequent use on the Continent, as a flower peculiarly adapted for the interior of houses. It was brought hither from Carniola, but its training has had considerable effect in altering its gene-

ral appearance. It was formerly called steeple milkie bell-flower.

A small and elegant border-flower, the Venus's looking-glass (*Campánula spéculum*) received its name from the resemblance of its round-shaped blossom to the form of a small mirror; and being thought particularly pretty, it was appropriated, too, to the Goddess of Beauty. The mirrors of the ancients were always circular in form. This flower was originally brought from the south of Europe, but it was thought by Sir J. E. Smith, that a pretty little campanula, which grows in the corn-fields in the midland and southern counties of England, the corn bell-flower, is the same species: it is certainly very similar, but not so large as the cultivated kind. The Venus's looking-glass is abundant in corn-fields on the Continent, and may be found in such places immediately over the Channel.

The order called by botanists *Campanulacæ*, contains a few others besides the bell-flowers, which are more similar to them in their properties than in their general appearance.

THE FADED HEATHER.

It is recorded of the Highland emigrants to Canada, that they wept because the heather would not grow in their newly adopted soil.

There may be some too brave to weep
O'er poverty, or care, or wrong,
Within whose manly bosoms sleep
Emotions gentle, warm, and strong;
Which wait the wakening of a tone,
Unmarked, unthought of by the crowd,
And seeming, unto them alone,
A voice both eloquent and loud;
And then the feelings hid for years,
Burst forth at length in burning tears.

He wept, that hardy mountaineer,
When faded thus his loved heath-flower;
Yet 'mid the ills of life, no tear
Had wet his cheek until that hour;
You might have deemed the mountain tree
Had sooner shrunk before the blast,
Or that his native rock should be
Rent by the winds which hurried past,
Rather than he a tear should shed,
Because a wild-flower drooped its head.

It would not grow—the heather flower,
Far from its native land exiled,
Though breezes from the forest bower
Greeted the lonely mountain child ;
It better loved the bleak wild wind
Which blew upon the Highland hill,
And for the rocky heath it pined,
Though tended both with care and skill ;
An exile on a stranger strand,
It languished for its native land.

O ! if the heather had but grown
And bloomed upon a foreign scene,
Its owner had not felt alone,
Though a sad exile he had been ;
But when he marked its early death,
He thought that like his mountain flower,
Withered beneath a foreign breath,
He soon might meet his final hour,
And die, a stranger and alone,
Unwept, unpitied, and unknown.

A. P.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALOE—AGAVE—HEDGES FORMED OF THIS PLANT—USES OF AGAVE BRIDGES MADE OF AGAVE FIBRE—USE OF AGAVE IN MANUFACTURE OF PAPER—ANCIENT MEXICAN MANUSCRIPT—PULQUE MADE FROM THE AGAVE—ALOE—USE OF THE ALOE PLANT BY MAHOMETANS—ALOE PLANTED ON GRAVES—ADAPTATION OF SUCCULENT PLANTS TO SPOTS ON WHICH THEY GROW—CACTUS—NUTRITION OF PLANTS.

“ But high in amphitheatre above,
His arms the everlasting aloe threw.”

Campbell.

UNDER the general name of aloe are comprehended two distinct families of plants, the agave and the aloe. From the latter, the drug so often employed in medicine, is obtained.

It was to a plant properly called agave, though usually termed aloe (the *Agave Americana*) that our forefathers attributed the remark-

able faculty of flowering once in a hundred years. This was for many years commonly asserted, but that great teacher—Time, has proved the assertion fabulous; and this may now be added to the list of popular errors, which the knowledge of later years has shown to be a long catalogue. The fact is, that this is a plant of remarkably slow growth, and as ours is not its native climate, it attains with us its usual size and maturity much more gradually than in its congenial clime. As it is very commonly planted in flower-pots, this slow growth is often seen; for, even when in a flourishing condition, the agave or aloe only lengthens its prickly leaf by slow degrees, and seldom grows an inch in a year. When, however, it has reached its ordinary size, it produces flowers, and this may be once in seventy, eighty, or a hundred years, as the degree of culture, and measure of heat afforded, may affect it. Several plants of the American agave, have blossomed in England during the last few years; but, as from their nature, the flowers cannot be frequent, public

attention is sometimes invited to the circumstance when it occurs. The leaves are full of pulpy matter, very spiny, and often six feet long. In some varieties they are striped with yellow, white, or red. The flowers, which are of a greenish yellow colour, continue in bloom three months, and crown a stem which rises thirty feet in height. The agave, owing to this lofty stem, presents one of the most gigantic specimens of plants which, in familiar language, we term flowers, in distinction from shrubs and trees. Our forefathers named this plant the sea-ayegreene, because of the evergreen nature of its leaves.

There are many species of agave in British gardens and hothouses. They are, however, very similar to each other in general appearance, and it is thought that travellers who describe them very often confound one with another.

One kind of agave (*Agave foëtida*) exhibits a striking rapidity of growth. M. A. Richard says of it, "this plant, which I have seen

covering the rocks along the shores of the Mediterranean, in the Gulf of Genoa, when it flowers, shoots out a stalk which sometimes acquires a height of thirty feet, in the space of thirty or forty days, or even less. As it thus grows about a foot in a day, it may be conceived to be in a manner possible, that its successive development should be perceptible to the general observer."

The agave, although in its wild state a native of countries in or near the Tropics, will grow in America, either in the low valley or upon the highest mountain; and it will vegetate in regions where the thermometer is below the freezing point, or flourish in the most burning part of the globe. Its tall stem is often reared upon the most arid spots of Africa, and at the Cape of Good Hope it forms an excellent fence for fields and gardens, offering an impervious barrier to the intrusion of man or animal.

These hedges are also common in the West Indies; and in some of the southern countries of Europe, in which the agave has been natu-

ralized, it is a favourite ornament, and is placed in vases in the garden and on the public promenade. At Milan, where the winter does not well agree with it, it is considered so desirable an ornament, that a representation of the plant, cut in copper, and ingeniously painted, is often made to supply its place, and quite deceives the beholder who is unaware of the practice.

The juice of the agave is much used in washing, instead of soap; the fibres of its leaves are manufactured into cordage, and its stalk supplies tinder for the domestic use.

In no other country, however, is the agave so generally serviceable as in those parts of America which are near the Tropics. The rope bridges of Mexico, so often named as dangerous to the traveller unaccustomed to cross them, are formed entirely of cords made of the fibrous parts of its root. These bridges, swung over some foaming torrent, have pieces of the bamboo stem placed at small intervals across the ropes, disclosing, through their interstices, the dashing of the waters: and this rude structure, oscillating

either with the wind or the unsteady footstep of the passenger, might appal the heart of the strongest and bravest stranger, though the Indian passes lightly and fearlessly over it.

The leaves of the agave are baked, and form an excellent dish; its trunks serve as beams for the roofs of the Indian dwellings, and its leaves are used as tiles; while from its succulent substance, sugar and medicine are procured. The Indians call the agave the pite, and "this plant," says Baron Humboldt, "may be used as a substitute for the hemp of Asia, the paper-reed of Egypt, and the vine of Europe." How few, as they see the prickly aloe of the garden flower-pot, think of its value to the Indian!

In former times the agave was extensively cultivated in Mexico for the manufacture of paper, as thousands were apparently employed, in the time of Montezuma, in painting hieroglyphics. The agave, besides that the mode of converting it into paper was very easy, had this advantage over the papyrus, from which the paper of Egypt was made,—that it flourishes

under greater variety of soil and climate, the Egyptian reed requiring a temperate climate and a moist situation.

The ancient Mexican manuscripts, which have received so much attention from the learned, and which have conveyed to us so much knowledge of the habits and manners of that injured and interesting people, were painted chiefly on paper made of the agave fibre. Many of their "picture writings," as Dr. Robertson expressively calls them, are yet preserved at Mexico, and many are at Bologna and Rome.

The pite is still a plant very important to the Mexican, and carefully cultivated on account of an intoxicating liquor called pulque, which is prepared from the juice of its flowers. The plants are arranged on the grounds in regular lines, and as it is not used until it bears flowers, the Indians are accustomed to watch it so earnestly, that it is said that they know, by invariable signs, the very hour at which it will burst into expansion.

Mr. Ward, speaking of the fondness of the Indians for this liquor, says, "The natives ascribe to pulque as many good qualities as whiskey is said to possess in Scotland. They call it stomachic, a great promoter of digestion and sleep, and an excellent remedy in many diseases. It requires a knowledge of all these good qualities to reconcile the stranger to that smell of sour milk, or slightly tainted meat, by which the young pulque drinker is usually disgusted; but if this can be surmounted, pulque will be found both a refreshing and wholesome beverage, for its intoxicating qualities are very slight, and as it is drunk always in a state of fermentation, it possesses, even in the hottest weather, an agreeable coolness." There is also a stronger liquor, resembling brandy, procured from this plant.

The different species of agave were all introduced hither from North or South America. The large American agave—or aloe, as it is oftener called—was the first kind cultivated in England, and was once, as a greenhouse plant,

much more valued than it now is, and a more frequent ornament of court-yards and terraces.

The plants more strictly called aloe are very similar to the agave, being of a succulent nature, and having spiny leaves. They are most commonly herbaceous, but are in some cases shrubs, and even trees. Like the agave, they are used in those countries where they abound as hedges for enclosures. By far the greater number of the species which are in England were introduced from the Cape of Good Hope, where they are very numerous.

The drug called aloes is the thickened juice of the aloe, and is procured by cutting the leaves in pieces, and pressing and boiling them. Various kinds of aloe are cultivated for medicinal purposes in the West India Islands, and at the Cape of Good Hope. The flowers of these plants are almost all of a yellowish green, but are rarely seen in this climate.

The Mahometans, especially those who reside in Egypt, regard the aloe as a religious symbol; and the Mussulman, who having performed a

pilgrimage to the shrine of the Prophet, considers himself ever after entitled to the veneration of a saint, hangs the aloe over his doorway, as a sign that he has accomplished this duty, and expects that it shall procure for him the reverence of every true disciple of the crescent. The Mahometans believe also, that any malign genius would shrink from entering the house, whose owner could display so holy a symbol. In Cairo the Jews likewise adopt the practice of hanging up the aloe, from a belief in the latter superstition; influenced by the same vague fear of evil spirits which induces the ignorant in the country places of our own land, to nail a horse-shoe over the entrance to their houses, as a security against similar objects of dread.

Peculiar regard is paid by the Mahometans to their burying-places. They are planted with trees and flowers, and whole families often resort thither to enjoy the shade and coolness of these spots; so that it is not uncommon in Eastern countries to find some who, like the afflicted youth mentioned in the New Testament, dwell

among the tombs. In the neighbourhood of Mecca, at the extremity of almost every grave, on a spot facing the epitaph, Burckhardt found planted a low shrubby species of aloe, whose Arabic name, *saber*, signifies *patience*. The plant is evergreen, and requires very little water for its sustenance. Its name, *patience*, alludes to the length of time which must elapse between the entombment of the dead and the great day of resurrection.

The different kinds of agave and aloe, destined as they are to inhabit countries where the sun has great power and the soil much aridity, and where the rainy seasons have long intermissions, are admirably provided by their succulent leaves and stems for the conditions under which they exist. The cuticle or thin skin which covers every part of a plant, is, in those which contain a great quantity of pulpy material, formed so as to imbibe moisture with peculiar facility, and to evaporate it very slowly. If a leaf of an aloe be separated from the parent plant, it may be laid in the sun for several weeks without be-

coming entirely shrivelled; and even when considerably dried, by long exposure to heat, it will, if plunged into water, become in a few hours, plump and fresh.

Plants thus formed and situated derive very little sustenance from the soil on which they grow, depending chiefly upon the atmosphere, which they imbibe through their leaves. This may be seen in the yellow stonecrop of the old wall, and the houseleek, which our forefathers carefully planted among the tiles on the roofs of houses, under the idea that it preserved them from thunder and lightning. Either of these plants will grow on the small quantity of soil which fills up the crevices of a brick-wall, or upon a stone grotto, and flourish there as well as in the mould of a garden.

The different species of cactus also, which produce their handsome scarlet or pink rose-shaped flowers, in the conservatories of this country, are never found wild but in a warm and very dry situation, where little food can be extracted from the earth. Of the same nature

are those singular productions of the African desert, the carrion flowers—*Stapélia*. These plants scent the air to a great distance with their disgusting odours of carrion, and attract the flesh-fly to the conservatory in England in which they are found.

The species termed the warty carrion flower (*Stapélia verrucosus*), is sometimes seen in the hothouse of this country.

The cactus, in its native climate, affords instances of immense vegetable growth, and is even planted in the neighbourhood of forts, as affording by its spiny leaves a better protection than a guard of human sentinels.

The nourishment of plants in general is effected by means of their roots and leaves. The small fibres of the root absorb, by their minute points, the solid, liquid, or gaseous substances of which the soil is composed. The expanded green leaves of the plant are another very important means of nutrition, as they imbibe the ingredients of the atmosphere. Thus, if a plant be deprived of its foliage, it will perish,

because the roots alone will not be sufficient to absorb all the nutriment requisite for it. In the case of the succulent plant of the rock or desert, the foliage performs by far the greater portion of absorption, the roots being generally extremely small in proportion to the size of the vegetable, and the soil containing little of that moisture which is the grand medium of the various substances absorbed by plants.

The agave belongs to an order of plants which are chiefly exotics.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SWEET WOODRUFF—MORNING IN THE COUNTRY—OLD
NAME OF WOODRUFF—SCENT JARS—MOORLAND WOOD-
RUFF—FIELD WOODRUFF—MADDER—BED STRAW—
GOOSE-GRASS—USE OF THIS PLANT IN VILLAGES—
VERSES.

“Come, while in freshness and dew it lies,
To the world that is under the free blue skies;
Leave ye man's home, and forget his care,
There breathes no sigh on the day-spring's air.
Come to the woods, in whose mossy dells
A light all made for the poet dwells,
A light, coloured softly by tender leaves,
Whence the primrose a mellower glow receives.”

Mrs. Hemans.

How pleasant it is to wander into the country when the breath of early morning is upon the dewy hills, the lark singing at heaven's gate, and when the slight mist in the atmosphere, and the deep blue of the sky, give promise of a

warm summer's day. The spider is busy repairing the slender line which the dew-drop has broken, and weaving a tenement which will perhaps last some hours, since no breeze seems likely to arise that will do more than sway the bough on which it hangs. A pleasant day it will be to wander in the wild wood and gather strawberries; but still pleasanter is it, while the day is yet young, for the poet and the lover of nature to linger on the borders of the quiet copse, to watch the opening flowers as they lift their meek eyes to heaven, silently, though unconsciously, speaking the praise of their Creator:

" Sweet is the breath of morn, its rising sweet
With charm of earliest birds."

The country is so calmly beautiful in the morning, that it seems rather to belong to the world of dreams which we have just quitted,—to be some paradise, which suffering and care cannot enter, than to form a portion of a busy and anxious world, in which even the very flowers must share in decay and death.

How glad are they who love nature too well to sleep when she is putting on her loveliest dress, to wander away into the woods and meadows. The mower, with his scythe, is laying low the flowers of the field, and like his great prototype Death, will spare neither the proud nor the lowly, and now will fall many

“ A coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers,
While that same dew, which sometimes on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls
Stands now within the pretty flowrets' eyes,
Like tears which do their own disgrace bewail.”

But the flowers of the hedges and copses will remain to pour out their fragrance long after the hay is carried from the field. The sweet woodruff is secure, for it is a lover of the quiet wood, and can only be found where tree or bush will lend a friendly shelter from the rough winds or storms, which might fall too heavily upon its gentle head.

A very pretty little plant is the sweet woodruff, with its thick clusters of purely white jasmine-shaped flowers, and its numerous coronals

of bright green leaves, placed one above another around its stem. One might almost fancy that a great Divine was thinking of this very flower when he said that the soul of a good man was like "such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year, low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing a sweet fragrance; standing peacefully and lovingly in the midst of other flowers, round about it, all in like manner, opening their bosoms to receive the light of the sun." This little flower of the wild is indeed well adapted to suggest to the mind an image of purity and humility.

The sweet woodruff (*Aspérula odoráta*) has slender leaves, placed around the stem in a whorl, the number of leaflets in each little coronal being generally eight. The foliage is something similar to that of the common cleavers, or goosegrass, but larger and much prettier, and the blossom, too, is far more elegant. It may be found in the woods during

the whole summer, but is in flower in May and June. It emits from its foliage, while growing, a delicate odour, perceptible to those only whose sense of smelling is acute.

The Latin name of the plant, derived from *asper* (rough), was given it on account of the roughness of its stem and leaves. Its English name is supposed to be a corruption of the word wood-rowel; as Turner says, "the leaves represent some kinds of rowels or spurs."

"The *Aspérula odoráta*," says Dr. Drummond, "is in English also called woodruff, woodrowe, and woodrowel. Perhaps you may recollect a rhyme which often forms an amusement of children at school, and is taken from the ancient method of spelling the name of this plant. It runs thus:—

Double U, double O, double D E,
R O, double U, double F E.

the old English word being Woodderowffe."

Ladies who are fond of gathering the leaves and blossoms of odoriferous plants, and pre-

servicing them for scent jars and boxes, often neglect the sweet woodruff, which is peculiarly adapted to their purpose. While fresh, its odour is not powerful, and even when by its being walked upon, its sweetness is expressed, this is often attributed to some of the flowers that grow about it, which are taller, and more showy, and thus better known. So are the humble often overlooked! With the exception of the lavender, there is perhaps no flower which, when withered, yields so pleasant a fragrance, or retains it during so long a time, as the sweet woodruff, which is often as sweet a year after it was gathered, as on the very day when the sunbeams dried it.

During the process of drying, a small quantity of the plant will be sufficient to scent a room; and if placed among clothes, it will not only give them, like Esau's garment, the smell of a field, but will effectually prevent them from being injured by the moth. Several plants retain some degree of odour when dried, but the cases are very few in which, like the sweet

woodruff, their scent is actually improved by the diminution of their freshness.

“ Filled with balm, the gale sighs on,
Though the flowers are sunk in death;
So, when Pleasure's dream is gone,
Its Memory lives in Music's breath.”

This plant is eaten by cattle, and it was formerly much valued as a medicine in liver complaints. It prospers well in a garden among shrubs, and it is to be regretted that it is not more commonly planted there, as it is one of the few plants which are uninjured by the shade of foliage, or the water which drops from it.

On chalky hills and moorlands, unsheltered by trees, another species of woodruff is very common. This flower (*Aspérula cynánchica*) is destitute of perfume, but its blossom is formed like that of the scented kind, though not so large, and slightly tinged with a pinkish colour. It is not so pretty as the former, as it grows much lower, and its foliage is small and inconspicuous, instead of forming any addition to its beauty. It blooms in the midst of summer,

contrasting with the deeper colour of the wild thyme and the eyebright, which are its common companions on the moor. It abounds on sunny chalky places throughout England, but is never found in Scotland or Wales. It is often called by cottagers squinancy wort.

One other species only remains to be enumerated among our wild flowers. This is the field woodruff (*Aspérula arvensis*), and it is by no means a common plant, being confined to a few districts of our land. Its blossoms are of a bright blue colour. The fruit which follows them is remarkable for its large size. It has only during late years been observed in England, and was formerly said to be a native of every country in Europe except Britain. There are in this country a few kinds of cultivated woodruff. One of them, the hairy woodruff, bears purple blossoms, and is found wild on the Pyrenees. The others are all natives of the south of Europe.

The woodruff with its stellate or starry leaves, belongs to the natural order *stellatæ*. Any one

used to walk in the fields must have remarked a number of small flowers, with their leaves all round the stem in a number of whorls, looking like so many green stars or coronals. These constitute the stellate tribe. The careless observer of plants might call them weeds, but he who loves flowers will give them a kindlier name. There is the pretty yellow ladies' bed-straw, with its abundant little golden blossoms, growing in hundreds on its stem. In more primitive times, when floors were strewed with flowers, and when couches made of the green stems from the meadow were deemed good enough for "dainty limbs" to repose upon, this, and its companion the white bed-straw, served for these purposes. Strow, or straw, being the old word for strew, the flower has kept its name in memory of a custom long passed away. This flower is common everywhere in England, on sunny banks. It is used by the Highlanders in dyeing red. The Norwegian peasants, who have a very picturesque appearance in their holiday dresses, wear at

these times small skull-caps of a bright red colour, and occasionally add to their attire a bright scarlet jacket, dyed with the juices of the yellow bed-straw. Some species of bed-straw, with little white flowers, grow about the fields, and one very pretty kind, the water bed-straw, may generally be found in summer time by the stream side.

Another *stellate* plant is the common goose-grass, or cleavers, and it is well known to those who are used to gather wild nosegays, for to which of us has it not clung with an unwelcome tenacity, winding itself into the fringes of shawls, and laying hold of anything woollen within its reach? The seeds of the goose-grass are used as a substitute for coffee, and the stalks are employed in Sweden to strain milk through. Its juice, when expressed, is an excellent purifier of the blood, and it is a famous village medicine.

The madder so much used in dyeing is another plant of this order. It is said that if poultry eat this plant it imparts a red colour to their bones.

SWEET WOODRUFF.

As sullenly swept the wintry wind
 With moanings loud through the hollow trees,
The withered foliage rustled behind,
 Borne from the oak by every breeze,
And it lay round the trees in a massy heap,
While the seeds of the flowers were in earth asleep.

But soon as the cheerful month of May
 Threw over earth her mantle of green,
There sprung a stem, whose starry array
 In clusters around the oak was seen,
And a fragrance pure as the breathings of morn,
From the delicate flow'ret was hourly borne.

Lovely as innocence was that flower,
 Which formed a ruff for the stately tree,
And fitted to grace the verdant bower,
 Where it grew in spotless purity ;
Yet it sprung from the brown and withered leaves,
As a gem of bright beauty from earth's dark caves.

A lady was lingering in the wood,
 To taste the delights of fragrance and shade,
And saw the lowly plant as she stood,
 And of its white flowers a wreath she made ;
And she wore it all day till the evening skies
Bore the rich pearly streaks of the sunset dyes.

Lightly she cast her garland away,
Yet she marked the fragrance that it threw
Was stronger than when at early day
She found it all besprinkled with dew ;
And the thought of a friendship came to her mind,
Which Time had but strengthened and refined.

She had soon forgot her floral wreath,
If from the chamber where it had been,
There had not issued as sweet a breath
As when it lay in its withered green ;
For the scent, like a memory, lingered on,
Of a gentle voice whose loved owner was gone.

A. P.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ST. JOHN'S-WORT—LARGE FLOWERED SPECIES—LOCALITY OF SOME PLANTS—SOCIAL PLANTS—VIRTUES FORMERLY ASCRIBED TO HERBS—EYE-BRIGHT—SORAGE—MOON-WORT—RUE, OR HERB OF GRACE—HOLY HERB—ENCHANTER'S NIGHTSHADE—MILK THISTLE—MONKSHOOD—JOB'S TEARS—LOVE LIES BLEEDING—WILD ST. JOHN'S WORT—CUSTOMS FORMERLY PRACTISED ON THE VIGIL OF ST. JOHN—CUSTOMS STILL PRACTISED IN GREECE, AND ON THE CONTINENT—YELLOW JUICE OF ST. JOHN'S-WORT.

Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
Of flowers, like flies, clothing its slender rods,
That scarce a leaf appears.

Cowper.

WE have several kinds of the St. John's-wort in gardens and shrubberies, some brought from China, some from North America, others natives of the Azores and Madeira Islands, but

none is more generally planted than the large-flowered St. John's-wort (*Hypéricum calycinum*). It has, like the other kinds of this plant, flowers of a bright yellow colour, and has around its centre several bundles of stamens which resemble filaments of gold. This plant is a native of Britain, growing wild in several parts of Scotland, and near Cork in Ireland. It requires but little care in culture, and is a very ornamental shrub among trees and bushes, bearing, after its blossoms have died away, a number of reddish green berries, which, like the flowers, have rather an unpleasant odour, resembling that of rosin.

But if we wander away over the heath, or by the meadow bank, or through wood or dingle, during the summer day, we shall not fail to find some one species or other of St. John's-wort growing in plenty. The kind to which the motto of this chapter particularly refers, is very common, and we could hardly find a spot in the land, over whose lap summer had strewed her blossoms, where either this or the

next mentioned kind may not be seen. This is the small upright St. John's-wort; it grows most frequently upon dry banks and heaths. The other most common sort is the perforated St. John's-wort (*Hypéricum perforatum*), which is much larger than the former, but has not so great a proportion of flowers. The corolla, as well as the foliage of this flower, is often so covered with minute dots, that if we only observed it casually, we might suppose it to be a plant that had been injured by insects.

Some handsome species of the St. John's-wort are found upon gravelly heaths; some upon stone walls; others in muddy bogs; each, though in general appearance much alike, yet bearing some features of difference which enable the botanist, when he sees the plant, to state the probable nature of the soil whence it was derived.

Whoever occupies himself with wild plants, soon becomes interested in observing their places of growth—habitats, as botanists call them. Some of these are very constant. Who ever thinks of finding the lily of the valley growing

wild in any spot but the wood or the sheltered bank; or if he meet with it in a garden, does not think how far more lovely it would appear were its bells swinging in the quiet seclusion of the woodland? Who ever expects to find the wood-sorrel lifting up its pencilled flower among the grass of the meadow? The yellow poppy of the sea-side never flaunts its showy head by the side of the silver streamlet, nor does the aquatic lily cast her shadow upon the waters of the ocean. Some plants, however, will flourish on any spot. To the nettle no soil or climate is unfriendly, and of any place which plants can inhabit, it takes possession. In the thickest and dampest parts of the forest — on the dry rock or wall, which can afford sustenance to little else than moss or lichen; on sunny bank, or on the borders of the cool rivulet,—the nettle may be found everywhere; unhurt by the ice and snow of northern regions, and gathering vigour from the rays of a tropical sun, to rise to the size of a tree, and acquire a virulence which can kill those who are stung by it. Our

gardens remind us that many plants will bear removal from their native soil, provided they receive the attention of man; but some are so tenacious of their native circumstances, that no care will save them if transplanted.

Plants, like animals, are found together in groups, covering a wide extent, like the buttercup, which bedecks a whole field, or single, as the bee-orchis, which is only met with here and there. We see the goodness of Providence, when we observe that those plants which are necessary for the food of man—as corn—are social, and not scattered over the landscape; “So that,” says Dr. Kidd, “they are capable of being cultivated gregariously as it were, with comparatively little care or attention. Thus in our own, and other European countries, the daily labourer, after his hired work for others, can cultivate his own private field of wheat or potatoes with very little additional expense of time or trouble.”

In former days, when the knowledge of plants had made little progress, many of their familiar

names indicated the properties they were supposed to possess. That some of the virtues ascribed to various plants might really be found in them, although in a less degree than was once imagined, there can be no doubt, as many are still used in medicines, and others are considered good remedies, but have yielded to newer discoveries. A large number of plants, however, received their names from some superstitious veneration attached to them from legends, and were regarded as charms and spells, and worn as preventives to disease. Thus in the days of chivalry, when a combat between two persons was about to commence, an oath was administered to each knight, of which the following was a part:—“Ye shall swear that ye have no stone of virtue, nor hearbe of virtue, nor charm, nor experiment, nor none other enchantment; and that ye trust in none other things properly, but in God, and your body, and your brave quarrel.”

In early times the common perforated St. John's-wort was called also “the balm of the

warrior's wound," and "the herb of war;" and in allusion to the clear little dots of the leaves, which look like small pierced holes, the poet says,

"Hypericum was there, the herb of war,
Pierced through with wounds and marked with many a
scar."

The healing efficacy which once made it celebrated by the herbalist and the poet, is not now thought very great, though the juice of the plant is still, in country places, applied to bruises, and would perhaps be more frequently used, but that healing applications may, in modern times, be procured at little expense from the apothecary.

The names of many common plants remind us of the value once attached to their restoring virtues. Thus the Druids called the mistletoe "all-heal," and the little wood-loosestrife, a flower very similar to the scarlet pimpernel, only that its colour is yellow, was called, besides its common name of herb twopence, *herbe aux cent maladies*. "He who hath sanicle

needeth no surgeon," says an old writer; yet its power of "making whole and sound all inward wounds and outward hurts" seems to have passed away with the proverb respecting it. The common yarrow is a plant to be found in almost every meadow, with a bunch of white flowers, sometimes tinged with pink, and leaves cut into many divisions, and is often called old man's pepper, or hundred leaves. It was once termed Knyghten milfoil, or Souldier's woundwort, because it was thought to cure the wounds inflicted by a spear.

Though less acquainted with the properties of plants than modern botanists, they who gave their familiar names to some of our wild flowers, seem to have loved them well, and associated a number of pleasing and pastoral ideas with them. Thus there is the heart's-ease, the traveller's joy, or virgin bower, by which the clematis is called; the wayfaring tree, which is the old name for the guelder rose; the waybread, which designated the plantain that grows by the way-side, and which we

often gather for canaries. Then there is the pretty lily of the vale, or May lily, as it used more frequently to be called, and both of which names are elegant and expressive; and the shepherd's needle, a little white-flowered plant, with long seed-vessels like sharp pointed needles; and the shepherd's purse, with its heart-shaped pouches, often called, too, by children, pickpocket. There is the wake-robin, which is the old name for lords and ladies, and the cuckoo-flower — both indicative of spring. There are the good King Henry, and the goose-grass, and the queen of the meadow, and many others; while the common name of chickweed has succeeded that of hen's inheritance; and we now call wood-sorrel the plant which, in other times, was termed cackoo's-meat, or wood-sower.

The names of many plants are connected with pious remembrances, and some of them doubtless were related to superstition. Yet, since the Saviour condescended in his instructions to ally the various objects of nature with

sacred thought, and has bid us gather subjects of pious contemplation from birds, and trees, and fields, and flowers, surely these names can be objectionable only when implying the worship of saints. We might ask, with Mrs. Sigourney,

“ We boast of clearer light, yet say
Hath science, in her lofty pride,
For every legend swept away,
Some better, holier truth supplied?
What hath she to the wanderer given
To help him on his road to heaven?”

The pretty grass brought from the East Indies, and familiarly called Job's-tears, from its crystal-looking fruit, once perhaps reminded the pious man of the sufferings of the patriarch, and silently preached a lesson of patience and sympathy.

Then we have too the star of Bethlehem, and the cross-flower, as the little milkwort was called, because it blossoms about Easter; the star of Jerusalem, which was the old name of the common yellow goat's-beard, (a flower

something resembling the dandelion), and the holy oak, of which the modern hollyhock is a corruption.

Many of our meadow flowers were dedicated to the saints. The pretty daisy was called herb Margaret, because dedicated to the saint of that name; the samphire is a corruption of *herbe de St. Pierre*, and the common yellow ragwort, with its gay starry flowers, bore the name of St. James's-wort. Then there is Our Lady's slipper, the little yellow pea-shaped trefoil, which grows on pastures; besides Our Lady's mantle, Our Lady's thistle, and the foxglove, which bore the old name of *Gant de notre Dame*,—all called, with a hundred others, in honour of the Virgin Mary.

Chaucer, Shakspeare, Spenser, Herrick, Ben Jonson, Milton,—how have their writings handed down to modern times customs connected with flowers, which else had been unknown! Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," when he portrays Adam as having forfeited that clearness of vision which he had once enjoyed,

represents Michael, when about to direct his eye into futurity, as having first

“ The film removed,
Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight
Had bred, then purged with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see.”

The pretty little euphrasy, or eye-bright, is a common plant on hilly pastures and moorlands. (see Plate.) The Highlanders still use it, infused in milk, for complaints of the eye, and it is, in villages, often employed in the same way, though pronounced decidedly injurious to the eye by men of science. It was, doubtless, in Milton's time, in high repute as a remedy.

Rue was, in the days of Shakspeare, called herb of grace: thus says the queen of Richard III.—

“ Here in this place
I'll set a bank of rue, sour herb of grace ;
Rue, even for ruth, shall shortly here be seen,
In the remembrance of a weeping queen.”

“ Here's rue for you,” says Ophelia, “ and some for me ; we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays”—that is by its Sunday name.

It was thus called, because handfuls of the plant were used by the priests to sprinkle holy water upon the congregation assembled for public worship. That it was also used in enchantments, we may infer from the lines of Michael Drayton :

“ Then sprinkles she the juice of rue,
With nine drops of the midnight dew
From lunarie distilling.”

This latter plant was the moonwort (*Lunaria*), often called honesty,—a common garden flower, with cross-shaped lilac blossoms, and round clear silvery-looking seed-vessels. It was considered a cure for madness. Chaucer also calls it *Lunarie*.

The common wild vervain was once called holy herb. It was much valued by the Druids, and used by them in casting lots and foretelling future events. The plant was ordered, by these ancient priests, “ to be gathered about the rising of the great dog-star, but so as neither sun nor moon be at that time above the earth to see it.” With this charge also, “ that before they take

up the hearbe, they bestow upon the ground where it groweth, honey with the combs, in token of satisfaction and amends for the wrong and violence done in depriving her of so holy a hearbe." It was called the sacred herb by the Greeks and Romans, who used it at their religious festivals, and sent it by their ambassadors on treaties of peace. This little plant is very common by road sides in England. It has very small lilac flowers, which grow at some distance from each other up the higher part of a stem about a foot high. It has rough and notched leaves, and flowers in July. It is quite a small and insignificant looking flower, but its old renown has not yet left it, for it is still tied around the neck, by cottage people, to charm away the ague. How little does the passenger by the road-side, if he sees this plant, think of the feelings of anxious veneration with which his countrymen once gathered it! Ben Jonson says,

"Bring your garlands, and with reverence place
The vervain on the altar."

This plant is one of those which are always contiguous to human dwellings. It is said of the vervain that it has never yet been found at a distance of half-a-mile from houses.

The name of one of our common garden flowers has suggested a beautiful poetic legend to Campbell. It may be but a poet's tale, yet few who have once read "O'Connor's Child," will look on the long drooping velvety plumes of this amaranthus without recalling the woes which befel the lonely lady. O'Connor's fair and lovely child was the bride of Moran, who fell beneath the hand of the lady's own brother. She chose for her home the wild spot where he fell, and where she buried him.

"A hero's bride, this desert bower
It ill befits thy gentle breeding,
And wherefore dost thou love the flower
To call—my love lies bleeding?
This purple flower my tears have nurst,
A hero's blood supplied its bloom,
I love it for it was the first
That grew on Connocht Moran's tomb.

• • • • •

Nor would I change my buried love
For any heart of living mould,
No, for I am a hero's child,
I'll hunt my quarry in the wild,
And still my home this mansion make,
Of all unheeded and unheeding,
And cherish, for my warrior's sake,
The flower of love lies bleeding."

The species of amaranth which forms the subject of this poem, is the well-known *Amaranthus caudatus*, which we have from India. Many kinds of amaranth are common, some shaped like fans, others in round heads and other forms. The drooping kind was formerly called *florimor*, or *flower gentile*, or *purple velvet flower*, or *discipline de religieuse*.

The old herbalist, Lyte, says of it, "the wemen of Italie make great accompt of this kinde, bycause of the pleasant beautie; so that ye shall not lightly come into any garden there, that hath not this herbe in it."

But we have wandered long from the flower which suggested the remarks on the names of plants—the flower dedicated to St. John the

Baptist, anciently called *Fuga doemonum*, and still gathered in some countries on St. John's-day. The name of this flower recalls to mind the festivities formerly practised in England on the vigil of this saint, when the bonfire was lighted, and young men and maidens, carrying posies in their hands, and having their brows encircled with vervain and St. John's-wort, danced round the blazing fire, and threw the flowers into it, at the same time invoking the name of the saint, and praying that the coming year might be more full of good, and less fertile in sorrows, than the one just passing away. These superstitious practices were founded on a strange misapprehension of the words of Holy Writ, which told of St. John that he was a burning and shining light. In London, in addition to the bonfires on the eve of this saint, as well as on those of St. Peter and St. Paul, "every man's door was shaded with green birch, long fennel, St. John's-wort, orpin, white lilies, and the like, ornamented with garlands of beautiful flowers."

St. John's-day is on the 24th of June; and in the villages of France and Germany, it is usual on this day to gather a species of St. John's-wort, and hang it over the cottage doors, or place it in the windows, under the idea that its sanctity may deter malignant spirits from entering, and that the inmates of the house may thus propitiate the favour of their patron saint.

In Lorraine no persuasions will induce the peasant to cut down his grass until the arrival of this day, however the sun may have previously prepared it for the scythe; while it matters not that the season be retarded, no event is allowed to delay the commencement of haying at this period.

The custom of reverencing St. John's-day is not peculiar to the countries already mentioned. It is generally believed throughout the Levant, that the plague disappears from the country on the anniversary of this revered festival, and the annual disappointment of their expectation is not sufficient to convince the Greeks of its fallacy. In many parts of the continent the

day is celebrated in a manner similar to the eve of Allhallows in Scotland, with various rural pastimes, accompanied by a plentiful use of the St. John's-wort.

The hypericum tribe are all yellow or orange-coloured blossoms, and they possess a viscid juice, which is valuable in medicine, and is so similar in its qualities to the gamboge of commerce, that a foreign species has received the name of American gamboge. The perforated St. John's-wort has been used in colouring brandy. There are eleven native species of this plant, and he must indeed have lived far away from wood and glen, and lane and meadow, who has never seen a plant of the St. John's-wort!

CHAPTER XXV.

MICHAELMAS-DAISY—AUTUMN — FAREWELL SUMMER —
SEA-SIDE DAISY — COMPOUND FLOWERS — VERSES ON
AUTUMN FLOWERS.

The windflower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the briar-rose and the orchis died amid the summer's
glow ;

But on the hills the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook, in autumn beauty
stood,

Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the
plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone from upland
glade and glen. *Bryant.*

It is with the different months of the year as
with the varieties of human character, each has
its peculiar excellence. It is, too, a happy ten-
dency in the human mind, which leads us to
think of each season as it comes as the best of
them all. There are the hopeful and the gay,

and the grave and the pensive; and who, as these characters pass in review before his mind, could decide which, if it were to become universal, he would choose either for the season or the companion? Even the daisied turf and smiling sky of June would be less beautiful to us if they were perpetual; and though we regret the falling off of summer flowers, as they lay them down to die, yet the winter too will bring his own charms, and even a few hardy blossoms will form a garland for "his thin gray hairs."

Spring-time seems peculiarly congenial to the feelings of the young and gay. The birds pour out the overflowings of their hearts in loud bursts of song, among woods where lately were heard only the loud harsh tone of the missel-thrush, as he sate in the pearly-berried mistletoe, or the low sweet song of the robin, who, "with all his feathers seemed a cold." Spring returns, and the lamb bounds away over the grass of the meadow, the leaves burst from their brown buds, fruit trees wear a dress of flowers, and the daisies, primroses, and violets

(and where shall we find a wreath so expressive to the human heart of much that it loves and hallows?) are making the lanes and fields gay and fragrant with their beauty and their wealth of odours. The joyous spirit of youth and childhood enters into the exhilaration of the scene, and gives a ready credence to its promises of a long season of liveliness and pleasure.

But autumn has its delights to those who, having known sorrow, find its pensive character more in unison with their quiet musings. To many, the silent sympathy of nature is more soothing than the consolations even of the human voice. There is a stillness, a sublimity in the close of an autumn day—when the shadows of the evening are stretched out—which inclines to meditation. The breezes may then, in their low utterings, be aptly compared to sighs; the daily fading away of the flowers, and the fall of the withered leaf, speak to the thoughtful like a voice from the dying, of change and decay. And yet how much of beauty is there mingled with the sadness! How rich the

colours which glow on the summits of the woodland boughs, green, brown, yellow, in all their varieties: here a dark patch of rich green, colouring those trees whose foliage will last through the winter; there an olive tinge, or one that is fast fading; now a crimson bough, and again a dark grey-looking mass, which seems as if it stood there to shew to advantage the gayer colours of its neighbours. And then, too, how beautiful is an autumnal sunset! shedding a golden light on field and wood, till all seems one wide scene of lustrous brilliance.

There is scarcely any flower which, more than the Michaelmas-daisy, seems identified with autumn. The chrysanthemums linger through a part of the winter, and may in fact be considered, with the laurustinus, as winter flowers; but the Michaelmas-daisy is the last of the summer wreath, and smiles upon a garden left almost desolate.

More than a hundred species of Michaelmas-daisy are cultivated in England, and some of them may be found during the latter part of

the year in almost every garden, growing sometimes as tall as shrubs, and covered with blossoms, which are called stars (aster), from their numerous rays. Varying from a pale delicate lilac to a dark purplish colour, they are generally too sombre, or too pale, to be very ornamental; yet they are clad in a proper dress for the last flower of the season, and may seem to wear a slight mourning for their departed companions. When all flowers save themselves are gone, and the summer birds have winged their way afar, and the bright butterfly is bright no longer, and the brittle brown leaves are crushed by the footstep, then this large family of plants is a welcome acquisition to the garden bed.

Upwards of two thirds of their number have been introduced into England from different parts of North America, where they grow so abundantly among trees, that the "aster in the wood" is as familiar to the schoolboy as to the poet; or their small stars, contrasting with the immense rayed blossom of the yellow sunflower, adorn some of the vast prairies of that country.

They are found too on the muddy shores of rivers, and scattered about upon dry and sunny places. Some species are brought from the Cape of Good Hope, where they are numerous on low swampy grounds, or about the pasture lands. A few species are derived from China, and others from the south of Europe.

There is so great a similarity in all the kinds of Michaelmas-daisy, that the attempt to particularize any number of them would be useless in any but a botanical work. The American large leaved daisy (*Aster macrophyllus*), which blooms from July to the end of September, and the red-stalked daisy (*Aster puniceus*), which is in blossom about the same time, are among the most ornamental of the Michaelmas-daisy.

One pretty little well-known plant, which is quite covered with a great number of chocolate-coloured flowers, the many-flowered aster (*Aster multiflorus*), is among the latest blooming of all the species, and has received the appropriate and poetical name of farewell summer. It is very generally called by this familiar name, and

it is often in greatest beauty during the chilly month of November.

Cold weather is so unfavourable to flowers in general, that very few remain to us after winter has commenced, and these are generally pale and scentless; but in countries where even their coldest seasons have a good degree of heat, the earth is always covered with a succession of varied floral beauties. In our land, the period at which flowers are in greatest perfection, is during July and August.

One species only of Michaelmas-daisy grows wild in Britain. This (*Aster tripólium*) is to be found on the sea-shore, or upon the marshes adjoining salt rivers. It very much resembles the commonest pale-coloured kind of the garden, except that its leaves are more succulent. It is not found upon the sand, although it is not always situated beyond the reach of the spray, nor without the sound of the swelling roar of the great waters. But whether the sea-shore or the salt river marsh be its home, the plant is impregnated with the saline air of its neighbour-

hood, and if one of the fleshy leaves be eaten, it will often be found as salt and as bitter as the briny drops of the ocean. It is among the very few flowers which can endure the rough blasts or the saline atmosphere of the sea-side. A nosegay gathered from the immediate vicinity of the shore, would afford little that was gay in tint, or sweet in fragrance, and would not bear comparison with the poorest bouquet that was culled from an inland meadow. The sea-side poppy is indeed of a bright yellow, and very similar in the size and shape of its blossom to its showy namesake, the poppy of the corn-field; and the little thrift, or lady's cushion, as it used to be called, bears a pink head of pretty flowers, and is considered ornamental enough to be used in many gardens as an edging to the beds instead of box. The white scurvy grass has a little blossom, shaped like the wall-flower, though seldom a foot high; and there are the sea-side convolvulus, and the samphire, and a few others, the most handsome of which is the scentless sea-lavender, that grows in a large full cluster of

lilac flowers, but is like the garden lavender in nothing else but its name, as it is lower, and bears large ovate leaves.

Crabbe, whose botanical observations had led him to mark the inferiority of the vegetable kingdom in the neighbourhood of the sea, gives the following melancholy picture of the plants of a small town on the coast.

“ Where thrift and lavender and lad’s-love* bloom,
 There fed, by food they love, to rankest size,
 Around the dwellings, docks and wormwood rise.
 Here the strong mallow strikes her slimy root;
 Here the dull nightshade hangs her deadly fruit,
 On hills of dust, the henbane’s faded green
 And pencil’d flower, of sickly scent, is seen;
 At the wall’s base the fiery nettle springs,
 With fruit globose and fierce with poisoned stings;
 Above (the growth of many a year) is spread
 The yellow level of the stoncrop’s bed;
 In every chink delights the fern to grow,
 With glossy leaf, and tawny bloom below:
 These with our sea-weeds, rolling up and down,
 Form the contracted flora of our town.”

* Lad’s-love is the village name for southernwood, which is very common on salt shores.

The wild Michaelmas-daisy blooms in August and September, and is about two or three feet in height. It is not unusual to find specimens of this plant in which the rays are wanting, and the flower of which consists only in the yellow centre or disk.

The Michaelmas-daisy is an instance of a very numerous order of plants, which bear what are called compound flowers; and as a little observation will enable any one to recognise blossoms of this kind, it may be desirable to explain their nature. A compound flower is one which consists of a number of small flowers situated on one point of insertion (receptacle), and enclosed in a calyx. The yellow centre of these flowers will, upon examination, be seen to be formed of several distinct little flowers, each one as perfect as is the tulip or any other large blossom, and having its own complement of pistils, stamens, germ, and seed. If the rays surrounding the blossoms of a compound flower be pulled away from it, each ray may be seen to have at its base a small tubular flower; so that what we

are accustomed to regard as a single flower, contains within itself more than a hundred.

The central part of a compound flower is generally of a yellow colour, as in the Michaelmas-daisy, the China-aster, and others; and the rays are either white, yellow, blue, or of some shade of red or purple. There is no instance in which a flower has yellow rays, and a white, blue, or red centre.

Many compound flowers are like the dandelion, formed entirely of rays, and are thence called ligulate, or strap-shaped.

Any one may recognise the greater number of plants of the natural order Compositæ, to which the aster belongs, by the star-shaped, compound flowers, if he only remember that the "bonnie gem," the daisy, is one of them. A few, as the thistle, are formed differently. The daisy! how many beautiful thoughts has this "modest crimson-tipped flower" suggested! Wordsworth's three beautiful poems have been quoted too often to be quoted here, but they are well known. Spenser sang of the "little dazie,

that at evening closes." Chaucer called it "*la douce Marguerite*," and "the 'ee of daie;" and Ben Jonson had a friendly word for the "bright day's eye." The botanist who named it *bellis perennis* admired the spring beauty; and one of Chaucer's names, *Marguerite*, is still preserved for this flower in France, and was taken from the Latin word for a pearl. The French call it also *Paquerette*, because it blossoms most about Easter (Pâques). The lamented Mrs. Maclean called our early favourites

"Daisies whose rose-touched leaves retrace
The gold and blush of morning's hours;"

and many poets who "have never penned their inspiration," but who are running gaily among the pearl-clad meadows, gathering it in handfuls, and pouring out the love of their little hearts upon the wild daisy, will sing of it when they can better express the feelings they already experience.

The large ox-eye or ox-daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), though ornamental to the field,

is injurious to the pasture, and is considered so much so by the Danes, that one of the laws of Denmark enforces its eradication by the farmers on whose lands it appears. It was in former times called Maudelyne-worte.

A large number of our wild plants belong to this order, and according to Dr. Richard more than a twelfth part of known vegetables are included in it. The tansy, which is a common plant in gardens, and often found by roadsides, was formerly made into puddings, or otherwise eaten, at Easter, its bitter flavour being symbolical of the bitter herbs which the Jews were commanded to eat at the Passover. The word tansy is a corruption of the old French name of *St. Athanasie*. If meat be rubbed with this flower no fly will touch it.

The large tribe of hawkweeds—those yellow flowers which grow in almost every meadow, or under hedges, in shape something resembling the dandelion, but with slighter stems, and much taller than that flower—received their name because it was fancied that the hawk derived his

strength of vision from their juices. The golden rod, a tall yellow flower; the coltsfoot, a lower blossom, which visits us in early spring, flowering long before its leaves appear; the camomile, the wormwood, the bright blue succory, the groundsel, the wild lettuce, and a great number of others, are known to many. The dandelion is thus called from *dent de lion*; its notched leaf being supposed to be shaped like a lion's tooth. It has gained nothing however by the exchange of this for its old name, for it once bore the prettier one of *condrilla*. It is much used in medicine, and its leaves are eaten as salad on the continent.

Many compound flowers ornament our garden both during summer and autumn; from the stately sunflower, which grows to an immense size in woods and plains in Mexico, and excited the astonishment of the Spanish conquerors, to the marigold, which received its name, *calendula*, of the Romans, from the word *calends*, because it is to be found in flower in all the *calends*, or months of the year. The many-

coloured dahlias are natives of the sandy fields of Mexico; the African marigolds have come to us from Japan and India; and the beautiful China-asters (*Chrysanthemum sinense*) are objects of general culture in the Chinese gardens, and far exceed in beauty those which we prize in this country. The French call this flower *Reine Marguerite*, or queen daisy. The chrysanthemums (literally flowers of gold) are valuable winter flowers, with their delicious scent. In the language of flowers they signify "do not leave me," and this meaning is more significant than many things expressed by floral symbols, as they are the latest blossoms of the year.

THE HOLLY.

From out the hedge-row's faded side,
Forsaken now by half its pride,
Still shoots the holly's unchanged green,
But not in barren beauty seen,
For, clustered o'er that goodly bough,
Are scarlet berries blushing now.

How forcibly recalled to me
The scenes of long-past infancy,

By violet of the early spring,
By paly primrose gathering,
By cowslip, like a fairy cup,
Just made to serve the dew-drops up.

And well do I remember, how
Soon as we knew the holly bough
Should bear its winter fruit, we found,
And with it, ivy berries bound,
But not till we had dyed them blue,
To make the contrast gay and true.

Bright holly, thy dark shining hue,
We even then with pleasure view,
When flowers of every rainbow tint
On earth the hues of heaven print,
And yielding to the sunny ray
Their luscious perfumes—live their day.

But when the snow-flake's silvery sheen
O'er wood, and hill, and vale, is seen,
Thy berries, with the ivy's jet,
Like ebony with rubies set,
Peeping from out their verdant wreath,
Shine brightest 'midst the general death.

And then from every cottage pane
We see thee beaming forth again,

And sacred church, and lordly hall,
Proclaim by thee their festival;
Thou thoughts of peace and joy dost bring,
With promise of another spring.

Our fathers taught us thus to cheer,
With nature's charms, the dying year,
And the soft laurel's emblemed peace,
With thy gay beauty to increase,
Till, Christmas fires bright blazing now,
We may not miss the holly bough.

CHAPTER XXVI.

**BUTTER-BUR—USED AS REMEDY AGAINST THE PLAGUE—
LARGE LEAVES—INSTINCT OF BEES—GARDEN BUTTER-
BUR.**

“No gem-like eye glitters in thy pale face,
No rich aroma breathes from thy dull lip,
Yet Petasites, there is that in thee
Which calls emotion from its lurking place
To work upon the brow, and tinge the cheek ;
There is a scene to which thou art allied,—
A room the sun scarce sees ; an atmosphere
Converted into poison, and the couch
The plague-spot marks his own ; where crowded
victims
Mingle their groans, their weeping, and despair.”

THE plague-flower was the name formerly borne by this plant, and what a host of melancholy recollections does its appellation bring to

the mind,—of the sad period when thousands of our countrymen lay dead or dying!

Comparatively inefficacious as seemed the skill of the physician, in allaying the general contagion during the most distressing time of its prevalence, yet some medicines gained a reputation as remedies, and among these was the butter-bur (*Petasites*). Whether or not the recovery of those who employed it may fairly be attributed to this plant, is now a matter of various opinion. Lyte, who translated his *Herbal* in 1578,—which was previous to that general visitation, the “Great Pestilence of England,”—calls it “a soveraigne medicine against the plague;” its value having been probably ascertained during some of those less alarming periods of this sickness, which occasionally afflicted our country with a slighter degree of fatality.

The plant which has in later years received the name of butter-bur, and is generally so called by country people, bears on the summit of a round and spongy stem of about eight

inches high, a crowded cluster of pale flesh-coloured compound flowers, which unfold and wither away before its leaves appear above the ground. Indeed, the blossoms of this plant and its foliage being never in perfection at the same time, and having no marks which might induce the observer to suppose that they were any way connected, are often thought to be, in the one instance, a flowerless group of foliage, and in the other, a leafless branch of flowers; and it is only those who are aware of this peculiarity, who would suppose them to be but one plant. Exactly the same manner of growth is exhibited by the coltsfoot (*Tussilágo*) which puts forth its yellow star by the way side, or in the cultivated field, at one season, and its broad leaf at another.

The leaves of the butter-bur are heart-shaped, having their margins irregularly notched. They are quite white on the under surface, with a covering of cottony down, and are the largest leaves possessed by a British plant. "One of them," says Lyte, "is large enough to cover a

small table, as with a carpet," and they are often about two feet in width. It is from the covering which their size affords, that its name *petasites* is derived, this being taken from a Greek word, signifying umbrella, or covering. Under its ample foliage, the poultry, which are often kept in country meadows, near farm-houses, shelter themselves from the rain, or find a cool retreat from the noonday sun, and sit assembled beneath its shade, as complacently as we should repose on a warm day beneath the cool canopy of the oak bough. It is often found on the sides of rivers, its leaves running over the banks in summer, so as to cast a fuller shade on the herbage which springs up beneath or between them. The white down which is so abundant upon them is picked off by cottage children, and used for tinder.

Bees are remarkably fond of this plant, and may, on a fine day, be seen continually hovering about its blossoms, humming their low song to the flowers. As it is in bloom in early spring, the farmers of Sweden, who have beehives, often

plant it in great quantity about their gardens as a resource for these intelligent little creatures before flowers are abundant. Guided by its instinct, the little insect selects the wholesome flower, and passes by the full nectary of the crown imperial, because its honey is poisonous.

The butter-bur is considered very injurious to meadow lands, for its white root creeps to a great distance, and by thus multiplying the plant, renders it very difficult of extirpation. It was to the root that were ascribed the remedial effects of the plant in the plague, and a decoction of it is still given by country people, to patients suffering from pestilential fevers.

There are in the gardens two species of butter-bur. The white kind (*Petasites álba*) is brought from the southern parts of Europe, where it is a very common plant; and the sweet scented butter-bur (*Petasites fragrans*) is often its companion in the luxurious plains of Greece, and scents the air above the "flowery fields of Enna." The latter kind extends itself, if left undisturbed, all over the garden, and grows

well among trees. Its blossom has a lilac tinge, and it bears large leaves; and is so powerfully fragrant, that though delicious out of doors, it is too powerful to be endured in the house by any but persons possessing the strongest nerves. Its scent resembles that of the white clematis, but is even stronger than that of this flower.

Both of the garden kinds are also peculiarly grateful to bees, and are in bloom during the three first months of the year, along with the snowdrop and crocus.

The petasites, being a compound flower, belongs to the order mentioned in the preceding chapter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LILIES—"LILY OF THE FIELD"—LILIACEOUS PLANTS OF
EQUINOCTIAL COUNTRIES—LILY OF THE VALLEY—
WATER-LILY—EASTERN LOTUS—GARDEN LILY—
ORANGE LILY—TURK'S-CAP LILY—KAMSCHATKA LILY
—ITS USE AS FOOD—MODE OF COLLECTING IT.

Queen lilies, and ye painted populace
That dwell in fields, and lead ambrosial lives,
In morn and evening dews your beauties bathe,
And drink the sun, which gives your cheeks to glow,
And outblush, mine excepted, every fair;
Ye gladlier grew, ambitious of her hand
Which often cropt your odours, incense meet
To thought so pure! Ye lovely fugitives,
Coeval race with man, for man ye smile,
Why not smile at him too? Ye share indeed
His sudden pass, but not his constant pain!

Young.

LILIES, lilies of the field! shall we hear their
names uttered without being carried back in

thought to the group once assembled on the plains of Judea. There the Saviour of the world, foreseeing the ills which should on a future day befall those who were now listening to his address, stored their minds with consolations adapted to their coming sorrows, and pointing to some of the lovely blossoms which sprung up before them, and directing their attention to a glory, with which the splendour of Solomon could not compare, he bade them take no thought for the morrow, since He who thus arrayed the lilies, should much rather protect and clothe them.

Surely when, in after days of sorrow, these lonely men again traversed these plains, as, destitute of food, and provided with raiment sufficient only for the present day, if their hearts failed them on thoughts of the morrow, surely they paused to "consider the lilies!" Many a tear may have been dropped upon the lily; many a song of gratitude uttered above its blossoms; and often may the simple flower have stayed the faith which else should have fainted.

If we could have ascertained exactly which is the lily of the field, connected with circumstances so fitted to interest the imagination and affect the feelings, this flower would have been an object of general care and love. In some periods, less enlightened than the present, how would the lily of Palestine have been cherished among those relics which have been the objects of a reverence almost amounting to worship, and the pilgrim who journeyed to Jerusalem to set his footstep on her sacred ground, would have borne thence the lily honoured by so memorable a notice.

Sir James Smith, speaking of the lily of the Scripture writers, terms it the golden lily. Various are the conjectures which have been offered as to the precise plant alluded to. Nothing can be certainly known upon this point, as many flowers were once called by the English word lily, which are now known to us by different names. Some writers have supposed it to be the narcissus, which is a favourite flower in the East; some have considered it

referred to the stately crinum; others have felt persuaded that the amaryllis, which is abundant in the fields of Palestine, is the flower, around which the disciples stood. An interesting note is given on this subject by the commentator on the 'Pictorial Bible,' whose footsteps have often trodden among the flowers of Judæa. In remarking upon the word lily, this gentleman observes, "The Hebrew word seems to indicate that the lily was one of those plants wherein the number six predominates in the distribution of their parts; such as the crocus, asphodel, daffodil, lily, etc. We once felt inclined to think that a species of asphodel was the plant alluded to, since the *Asphodel ramosus* covers immense tracts of land in the south, and is said to be good fodder for sheep:—'he feedeth among the lilies.' But in a matter of so much obscurity, we prefer to concur with those who think that the *Amaryllis lutea*, or yellow amaryllis, may be here intended. The yellow amaryllis bears some resemblance to our yellow crocus, but with a larger flower and broader leaves.

The blossom emerges from an undivided spathe, or sheath, and is of a bell-shaped contour, with six divisions, and six stamens, which are alternately shorter. The flower seldom rises above three or four inches above the soil, accompanied by green leaves; which, after the flowering has passed, continue to wear their freshness through the winter. Many acres are often covered with this pretty flower, which is in its prime in September and October. It is a hardy plant, and was introduced into the English gardens by Gerarde, in 1596, where it is seen flowering nearly at the same time as the saffron crocus and the colchicum (meadow saffron) with which it harmonizes greatly in appearance."

The lily of the Scriptures seems to have been a flower which excited much admiration, as it was the subject of many beautiful comparisons. It is often spoken of in the Song of Solomon, and "He shall grow as the lily. He shall be as the dew upon the lily," were figures employed by the inspired writers to convey ideas of purity and loveliness.

Baron Humboldt, when remarking on the absence of meadow lands in tropical countries, dwells on the number of lily-like plants, with long slender leaves, which stud the equinoctial plains. "It would seem as if liliaceous plants, mingled with the grasses, assumed the place of the flowers of our meadows. Their form is indeed striking; they dazzle by the variety and splendour of their colours, but too high above the soil, they disturb that harmonious relation which exists among the plants that compose our meadows and our turf. Nature, in her beneficence, has given the landscape under every zone its peculiar type of beauty."

"There's beauty all around our paths, if but our watchful
eyes

Will trace it in familiar things, and in their lowliest
guise."

And we may find it alike in the green fields of our own country bespangled with dew-drops and daisies; or in the more gorgeous array of flowers, and birds, and butterflies, of all the

hues of the rainbow, which look up to a tropical sky, or flit across a cloudless landscape.

But leaving the golden "lily of the field," we will turn to a humbler flower,—the lily of the valley,—the May lily of old writers (*Convallaria majalis*). This cannot be the lily of Scripture, because it is a native of cold or moderately warm countries only, and would never bloom in a field of Palestine. In Britain, its white bells come forth in the early season of the year. The author of the 'Mirror of the Months,' calls them the "little illumination lamps," and truly in their form they closely resemble the objects of his comparison. Hidden between their broad green leaves, and blooming unseen in the retired woodlands, we are accustomed, even from our childhood, to regard the lily of the valley as an emblem of modesty. A little poem written for the very young reader, but equally suitable to others, says of this beautiful spring flower,—

See the lily on its bed,
Hanging down its modest head,

While it scarcely can be seen,
 Folded in its leaf of green ;
 Yet we love the lily well,
 For its sweet and pleasant smell,
 And would rather call it ours
 Than a thousand gayer flowers.

Shakspeare alludes to its drooping posture,—

Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom where no pity,
 No friends, no hope, no kindred weep for me,—
 Almost no grave allowed me ! like the lily
 That once was mistress of the field and flourish'd,
 I'll hang my head and perish.

Very few are the floral beauties which deck the barren hills and plains of Norway; yet Mr. Inglis says of the lily of the valley in that country, "It stood everywhere around, scenting the air, and in such profusion, that it was scarcely possible to step without bruising its tender stalks and blossoms. I have not seen this flower mentioned in any enumeration of Norwegian plants, but it grows in all the western parts of Norway, in latitude 59° and 60° wherever the ground is free from forest, in greater abundance than any other wild flower."

It is rather singular that the fragrance of this flower, which is, while the plant is fresh, remarkable only for its sweetness, possesses, when dried, a powerfully narcotic influence. The root too of the wood-lily is extremely bitter. In Germany the flowers are made into wine.

Again, there is another flower which we call lily — the lily of the brook (*Nymphaea*), the nymph or naiad of the streams, the very queen of all our wild flowers. The water lily, with its large round leaf and full blossom, looking like a white rose, lies upon the bosom of the clear waters, and if gathered, showers out the liquid pearls from its full cup. It is ephemeral as beautiful. Professor Hooker says of it, that it delights in still waters, and haunts the quiet recesses of the Highland lakes. It is also particularly partial to the shadow of trees. Mrs. Hemans has addressed some elegant lines to this flower :

“ O beautiful thou art,
Thou sculpture-like and stately river queen,
Crowning the depths as with the light serene
Of a pure heart !

Bright lily of the wave!
Rising in fearless grace with every swell,
Thou seem'st as if a spirit meekly brave
Dwelt in thy cell.

It is often said of our wild water-lily, that it retires below the surface of the stream soon after noon, and remains there during night, rising again upon the waters in early morning. Those who have been accustomed to ramble by moonlight near streams decked with these alabaster vases, know that this is not strictly correct, as many of them lie folded above the water; it is possible, however, that some may sink, and it is quite certain that they close after the sun has lost its power.

The white water-lily has a pleasant odour, and its roots are used in Ireland for dying brown. The flower with us is too rare and too ornamental to be applied to any purpose of this kind. Its roots fix themselves at the bed of the stream, and the plant is easily propagated, it being necessary only to throw the roots into the water.

The yellow water-lily (*Núphar lútea*), called by country people brandy bottle, on account of its odour, often grows on the same stream as the white lily, but it is far more frequent. Its flower is not so full of petals as the white kind, and not nearly so handsome; yet, floating upon its long stems, and decked with its large leaf, which is so smooth that the water runs off it, it is very pretty. The roots are nutritious, and are frequently powdered and eaten for bread in Sweden. It is said that, mingled with the bark of the Scotch fir, they form a cake much relished by the Swedes, but it might possibly be less agreeable to our palates. They are also burnt on the hearths of farm-houses, because their smoke is reputed to drive away the crickets, whose chirping is sometimes too loud and shrill to be deemed musical. Many country people, however, regard the crickets as "little harbingers of good," and would not permit the lily root to be burned to their annoyance.

The water-lily of the East—the *Nymphæa*—though much resembling our "flower made of

light," is still more beautiful, and it enlivens the streams of India, Africa, and some parts of America with its rich blossoms, which are sometimes blue or red, as well as white. It is called Lotus, and is said to sink quite below the water in the evening and night. Thus Moore says of it:

"Those virgin lilies all the night,
 Bathing their beauties in the lake,
That they may rise more fresh and bright,
 When their beloved sun's awake."

In Egypt it abounds on the streams, and the Egyptians represent the dawn of day by a youth seated on its flower, and consecrate its blossoms to Osiris—the sun.

The Chinese have a beautiful and odoriferous water-lily called the Leenhwa, and, its root being nutritious, it is made by them into cakes.

The Eastern lotus, or water-lily, is powerfully fragrant, and its flower is much valued by the Hindoos, and consecrated by them to one of their deities. Its leaves serve them for many domestic purposes, as they cover their tables

with them, and eat their food from the smaller ones; while flowers and fruit are presented to the stranger in a simple basket made of the lotus leaf. It has been said by one well acquainted with the Ganges and its banks,—“The rich and luxuriant clusters of the lotus float in quick succession upon the silvery current. Nor is it the sacred lotus alone which embellishes the wavelets of the Ganges; large white, yellow, and scarlet flowers pay an equal tribute; and the prows of the numerous native vessels navigating the stream, are garlanded by long wreaths of the most brilliant daughters of the parterre. India may be called a paradise of flowers: the most beautiful lilies grow spontaneously upon the sandy shores of the rivers, and from every projecting cliff some shrub dips its flowers in the wave below.”

But although we have thus lingered over several flowers called by the general English name of lily, some of the plants which have been mentioned have little affinity to each other, except it be the white tint by which

many of their blossoms are characterized. The family of tall garden flowers which are named lily (*Lilium*), are some of them intensely white, and received their name from the Celtic word *Lis*, which signifies whiteness. Old Ben Jonson, who had a poet's love for the beauties with which earth is covered, admired the lily :

“ It is not growing like a tree
In bulke, doth make man better be ;
Or standing long an oake, three hundred yeare,
To fall a logge at last, dry, bald and seare :
A lillie of a day
Is fairer farre in May,
Although it fall, and die that night,
It was the plant and flowre of light.”

“ Fair as the lily,” is a comparison suitably applied, when the tall white garden-lily (*Lilium candidum*) is referred to. This plant is a native of the Levant, and some other moderately warm climates. It is one of the most elegant flowers which we have in the garden, and though so frequent that the little bed in front of the cottage window is often graced with it,

it is generally much admired. Some other less common species of garden lily are also white.

The common white lily has lost some of the interest which it possessed among our ancestors, for they supposed that the price of a bushel of wheat in the ensuing season, was foretold by the number of white cups which surmounted its stem, — each bell being a sign of a shilling. This fancy actually prevailed during a long number of years, and it is a strange instance of self-deception, that summer after summer they continued to believe a prediction so continually proved to be fallacious. This flower was highly extolled by ancient herbalists, as a cure for the bite of a serpent, and its bruised petals, laid upon a wound, are still justly considered by country people a safe and speedy remedy. They are much employed by those sage matrons who take charge of the wounds and bruises which befall the children of the village, and who may rival “the learnedst lady in the land,” of Spenser, in their “power of herbs.”

The orange lily (*Lilium bulbiferum*), though wanting the classic elegance of its white rival, is still a handsome ornament of the flower-bed. It is a native of the southern countries of Europe. When the Dutch were displeased with the House of Orange, they used to exterminate this flower from their gardens on account of its colour. The tiger-spotted lily (*Lilium tigrinum*) is another beautiful lily, which we should be sorry to spare from the summer garden, and is found wild in China.

The common Turk's-cap lily (*Lilium martagon*) is the ancient hyacinth—"the sanguine flower inscribed with woe." It is not now so frequently cultivated as formerly.

One plant of this species—the scarlet Kamtschatka lily (*Lilium Camschatcense*), is very important to the natives of the cold Kamtschatka. Over the dreary lands of that country this lily extends itself very plentifully, and it is, besides, an object of frequent culture. It forms, by its rich and gay colours, and by its profusion, a prominent object in the flora of a country of

which the natural productions are seldom brilliant or magnificent. Its bulbous root, which is called by the natives *saranne*, contains a farinaceous substance that is remarkably nutritious. The gathering of the *saranne*, and preparing it for use by drying it in the sun, forms a portion of rustic labour, somewhat similar to our harvesting, and it is entirely performed by the females of the country, except as they are aided in their industry by a little animal generally deemed very useless — the field-mouse.

The little wild mouse of Kamschatka subsists during the winter season upon the *saranne*, and warned by its instinct that the lily roots will become useless, unless exposed to the sun to dry, it not only collects them at the proper season into a hoard, but lays them out in the air, during sunny weather, to prevent their being decayed by the moisture which they contain. These small deposits of lily root are sought out by the Kamschatdales, and appropriated to their own future provision; but less they should deprive

themselves of the assistance of these diligent purveyors, they are careful to leave a small number of the roots, on which the animals may subsist until the returning flowering season.

The *saranne* is sometimes boiled and eaten in the same manner as our potato; but its principal use is in forming a kind of bread, on which, during a great part of the year, the natives of Kamschatka subsist. These poor people, living almost entirely upon fish, bread, and the berries which are so abundant in cold countries, are glad to have some change in their limited articles of diet. They are supplied with their two chief sources of subsistence alternately: for during the season in which fish is plentiful, the lily root is not to be procured; while, at the period at which the supply of fish ceases, this latter provision commences.

None of the flowers mentioned in this chapter on lilies, except the various species of garden lily (*Lilium*), belong to the order called by botanists *Liliacæ*, as the plants of this order are found only in cold or moderately tempered

latitudes; but when English writers speak of liliaceous plants, they mean such as have a blossom shaped like the lily, and long slender leaves. The lily which is described as out-rivalling the glory of the Eastern monarch, the modest lily of our own valleys, and the floating species, all belong to different orders; but as the plants contained in the liliaceæ are few, we may here notice them all.

The tulip (*Túlipa*) was introduced hither from Persia in 1559. It is unnecessary to speak here of the immense importance which Dutch florists have attached to this plant, and it is still an object of much value, both in Holland and in England, among cultivators of choice flowers. It was formerly called *tulpia*.

The fritillary, which includes the crown imperial (*Fritillária imperiális*), with its large cluster of orange, or pale yellow bells, is a family of handsome plants. The word fritillary is taken from *fritillus*, a dice-box. One species grows wild in Britain, and is often called the mourning widow. It is very rare, but the

chequered marks on its flower suggested the name of the genus. It was formerly called chequered daffodil.

The remaining plants of the lily order are the pretty dog's-tooth violets (*Erythrónium*), which are quite unlike a violet, being more in shape like a small Turk's-cap, having, however, a single flower on the top of a stem, and being generally of a purple or yellow colour, though sometimes white. This plant has at first but one leaf, until the flower has blown, when it is decked with two broad leaves, spotted with white and reddish purple. It grows wild in Germany, Italy, and Siberia. The superb orange or blue flowered *gloriosa*, which has no English name, and received this from the beauty of its flowers, and the tall evergreen, *yucca*, complete the list of this order of plants. The latter plant, with its aloe-like look, is often called Adam's needle. It has handsome white or cream-coloured blossoms, and grows wild in various parts of America.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CARNATION AND PINK—DEPTFORD PINK—MOUNTAIN PINK
—CLOVE JULY-FLOWER—VARIETIES OF CARNATION —
ROSE CAMPION—LYCHNIS—CHICKWEED—SOAPWORT—
SPURREY.

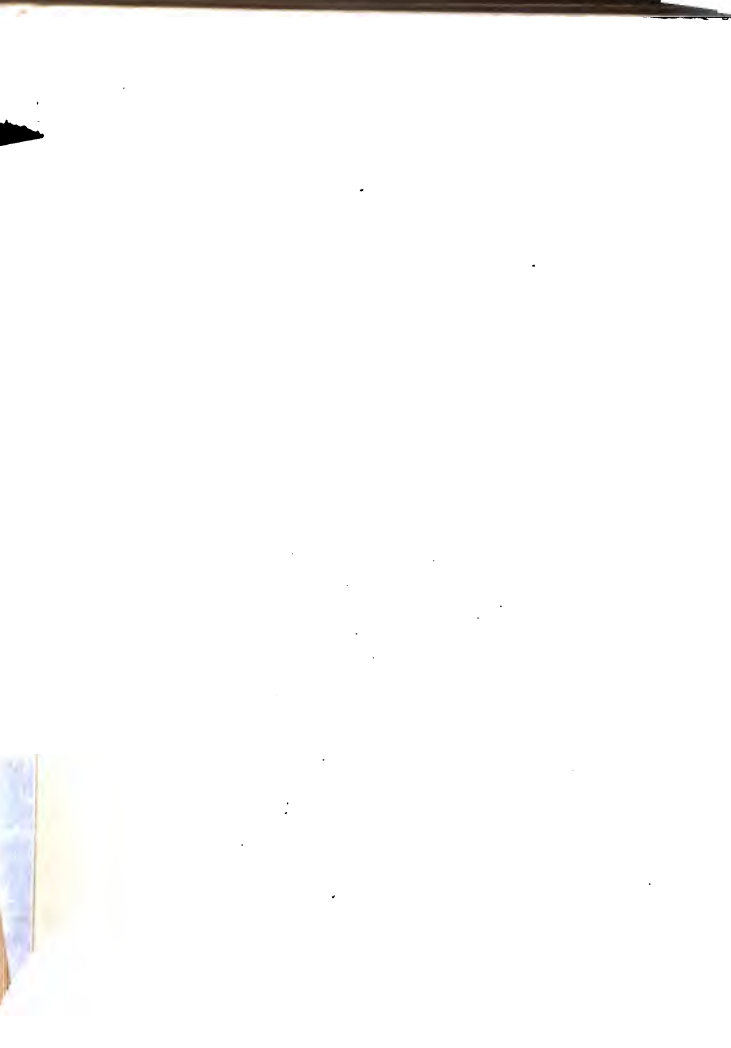
“ The curious choice clove July-flower.”

“ I would rather see thyme and roses, marjoram and July-flowers, that are fair and sweet and medicinal, than the prettiest tulips that are good for nothing ”

Jeremy Taylor.

DIANTHUS, the “ Flower of God,” or the Divine flower, is the Latin name of this family of plants, and was given to the carnation and pink, to shew the estimation in which these beautiful and fragrant flowers were held. The carnations were formerly called also coronations, and clove July-flowers, or gilliflowers; and a curious old name for the pink was that of soppes in wine, because its spicy petals were used to flavour





the wine goblet of our ancestors, as rosemary flavoured the tankard of ale. Thus Spenser says,

“ Bring hether the pincke and purple cullambine,
With gelliflowres ;
Bring coronations and soppes in wine,
Worn of paramours.”

During summer our gardens have no greater beauty than the varied tribe of carnations, and the flower cultivator is busily employed in tending them, and giving their slight stems and heavy blossoms the needful support, while their powerful aroma is scarcely excelled in strength and sweetness even by that proverb of odours, the rose. In winter, when the flowers have perished and left the scene almost desolate, the long slender leaves of the pinks, covered with their sea-green coloured powdery bloom, and planted in tufts about the borders, still remain as a memory of the past and a hope of the future.

There are, in our island, five native species of pink, but they are generally rare, and when abundant are limited in their places of growth ;

so that many persons who are familiar with wild flowers, would be surprised to hear that such a thing as a wild pink was to be found beneath a hedge, or in a meadow.

The little Deptford pink (*Diáanthus arméria*) is the least rare kind, and it may sometimes be seen thickly interspersed among the grass of a meadow land. The form of its blossom is similar to that of the single garden pink; each flower is about the size of one flower of the sweet-william, and the blossoms grow like those of that plant, in a cluster, but the cluster is much smaller. This scentless pink, even when it is found in plenty, does not, like the yellow cowslip and the blue speedwell, give its peculiar hue to the spot on which it abounds, as its small rose-coloured or white petals are not, at a distance, distinguishable among the grass, and the stem and foliage are of a dark green tint. Its petals are notched at the margin, and the rose-coloured blossoms are speckled with minute white dots. The plant is about a foot high, and it blossoms in the months of July and August.

Various opinions have been given as to the origin of the garden pink (*Dianthus hortensis*), which some botanists think was derived from a wild pink that grows also in the fields, while others consider it is but a cultivated kind of the species which grows on old walls, and is commonly known by the name of the castle pink, or wild clove pink. It is generally believed that the pink was quite unknown to the ancients.

One wild species, the mountain-pink (*Dianthus coësius*), is a large handsome flower, and grows only on lofty mountains. Never is it found on plain or valley; but it is one of those blossoms whose beauty gladdens the mountaineer, or bids the traveller wonder, that so lovely a flower should be blushing on the lone summit, scarcely accessible to his footstep; or cheering a rock, where only the yellow lichen, or the verdant or grey moss, reminds him of vegetation. Such a sight might bid one think of the old motto which accompanied a wild flower, "I trust only in heaven." How beautiful is it in its loneliness! Scarce an eye meets

it but that of the towering bird, as he dashes through the air above it, yet is it as full of lustre as the flowers we daily see and admire. Surely it should arrest the eye and the thoughts of the traveller, as certainly as would a monument of human skill on such a spot. Like a lone ruin, it is a page of story, telling not alone of the past, but the present, and reminding us of a Being who has reared it there, where it stands a memento of power and goodness.

“ Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give,
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

The most interesting of all our native species, is the clove gilliflower,—the July-flower of the old writers,—the castle-pink (*Dianthus caryophyllus*). It is generally allowed that from this flower have been derived many of the bright and fragrant carnations of the garden; and many writers think it also the origin of the garden pink. It has a delicious clove-like perfume, and, after a shower of rain, its odour

is borne upon the gale to some distance from the wall on which it grows. Its comparison with the carnation affords an opportunity of observing, in the latter, the difference which may be effected in the size and beauty of plants by the skill of the cultivator, as few persons would suppose, from its appearance, that it had originated so showy a flower as that of the garden.

The wild castle-pink grows chiefly on ruins, and sometimes crowns the lofty and crumbling wall of the old tower or castle. It is to be found on the walls of Sandown Castle, near Deal, and on ruins in the neighbourhood of Norwich. On the massy walls of the ancient castle of Rochester, "Bathed, though in ruins, with a flush of flowers;" it grows on heights far beyond the reach of the passenger, rendering the top of the ruins a summer garden. It blossoms in July, and there are not more than half a dozen spots in our island where it may be found wild. When transplanted to a garden, it soon assumes a different appearance; and the

little castle-pink would not be recognised, on another summer, on the bed of the garden, as the wild flower which had last year greeted us from its lofty abode. The unfrequent occurrence of this pink compels the florist to receive the greater number of carnations from countries where it is more abundant. The carnation was first introduced into British gardens from Germany, in which country its culture receives considerable attention.

The varieties of carnation amount to several hundreds, but the names having been given by gardeners, are quite arbitrary, and convey little or no idea of the nature or habits of the respective plants. Cultivators have arranged them into three principal divisions. Flakes, which are striped with two colours only, and of which the stripes are broad: bizarres, from the French word signifying odd, which are irregularly marked and of several colours: and the picotees, from piquetté (spotted) because they have a white or yellow ground, spotted with some gay colour. The picotees are generally

smaller flowers than the other carnations. Many carnations are brought from Italy and those flowery lands the islands of the Mediterranean.

Among the sweet tribe of pinks, we must not omit the common and handsome border flower, the sweet-william (*Diáanthus barbátus*) with its large tufts of crimson or rose-coloured blossoms. It is an old favourite, because it is so hardy that it will grow in any garden, and even the little child may tend it and call it his own. It formerly bore the name of "London tuftes," and received its Latin distinction, *barbátus*, from the bearded nature of its calyx. The old botanist, Gerarde, praises it "for its beauty, to deck up the bosoms of the beautiful, and garlands and crowns for pleasure;" but few besides cottage maidens now ornament themselves with it. Like the large feather-like leaves of the carrot, which the ladies of Charles the Second's time used as plumes for their hair, it has given way to ornaments less beautiful, perhaps, but more costly.

The carnation and pink are the pride of the natural order to which they belong (Caryophyllæ). This order is, however, very interesting to English botanists, because many of their wild favourites are found in it, and gladden the country scenes in which they delight to linger. The corn-cockle, whose lilac petals, rising among the tall corn, have procured for it the name of *Agrostemma*, or crown of the field, is a common flower. The various sorts of campion and catchfly (*Silène*), which are remarkable for their inflated calyxes; and the white and rose-coloured lychnises, some of the handsomest kind of which are found by streams. The cottony down on these plants is often employed for wicks of lamps. The flowers are showy, and common during summer in all parts of England, and many species are planted in gardens.

All the tribe of chickweeds belong to this order. Some of them, especially those known commonly by the name of stitchwort, with their white pearly blossoms, are very pretty in spring

time, under hedges and in woods. They have long slender leaves, like those of corn, and white flowers, not quite so large as those of a primrose, shaped like a star, though not of the same kind as the aster, or daisy, but having five petals. Their starry shape suggested their Latin name of *stellaria*. Then there is the little chickweed, with its small white stars, (*Stellaria média*), a plant which grows chiefly on cultivated places, and which is so commonly carried home by persons who keep those innocent little prisoners, tame goldfinches. It affords a supply of food to thousands of our wild summer birds, and is extremely profuse, coming up at all seasons of the year, for their meals. It is also eaten in some villages, boiled as a table vegetable, and is very wholesome.

A handsome wild plant of this order, is the soapwort (*Saponária officinalis*). This can hardly be called a common plant, because in many counties it is scarcely to be met with, though in Kent it is by no means rare. It has a full cluster of rose-coloured blossoms, rather

larger, and more loosely grouped, than those of a sweet-william, which flower, in its leaves, it much resembles, these being opposite to each other, and partly clasping or surrounding the stalk at their bases. The juice of the soapwort is one of those vegetable substances which, by making a lather with water, will cleanse linen, and remove grease as effectually as soap. It grows more generally in the neighbourhood of villages than in any other situation, as if Providence had placed it there especially for the service of the cottager,—yet it is very little used, either from ignorance of its properties, or because it would require some cultivation to render it sufficiently plentiful for household purposes. It needs the addition of ashes to make it a good soap for washing linen; but it is of much service to the shepherds on the Alps, who wash their flocks, previously to shearing them, with soap-suds made by boiling this plant in water. The large fruit of the horse-chestnut has similar cleansing properties, and may be used by cutting it into small pieces, or scraping

it into water. It has even been suggested that if the nuts were reduced to powder, and made into balls, with some unctuous substance, they would answer all the purposes of our manufactured soap; and yet numbers of poor people see these nuts lying decaying in their neighbourhood, and have no idea of making them of any service.

The peasantry of several parts of the Continent use them frequently, and the same people gather the beech-leaves, and make them into mattresses. John Evelyn says of this latter practice, that it is an excellent one, as the mattresses thus filled, are much more pleasant to lie upon than those made of straw; and adds, that they only require the leaves to be changed about once in eight years. He speaks of these couches from his own knowledge, for he tells us he has often slept upon them "to his great content."

But to return to the plants of the order Caryophyllæa. The little corn spurrey (*Spergula*) is another very common instance of this

order. It is a little white-flowered plant, with a great number of small fibre-like leaves, growing in a whorl all around the stem. The seeds of the spurrey are very numerous, and the plant often extends itself over pasture lands, rendering them a valuable addition to a dairy-farm, as cows are much improved by feeding upon it.

With the exception of the few conspicuous plants of this order to which we have alluded, it consists of a number of small plants, few of which are placed in gardens.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CISTUS—EPHEMERAL FLOWERS—GUM CISTUS—LADANUM
—ANCIENT MODE OF COLLECTING LADANUM—PURPLE
CISTUS—WILD ROCK ROSE.

“ Flower, thou seem'st not born to die,
With thy radiant purity,
But to melt in air away,
Mingling with the soft spring day,
When the crystal heavens are still,
And faint azure veils each hill,
And the lime-tree doth not move,
Save to songs that stir the grove,
And earth all glorified is seen,
As imaged in some lake serene.”

Mrs. Hemans.

THERE is scarcely a flowering shrub which, during its season of bloom, makes a greater show upon the garden-beds than the gum-cistus (*Cistus ladaniferus*). Covered with a profusion of blossoms, in form something like that of the

wild rose, this plant makes a handsome appearance when seen from a distance. Upon a nearer survey, its blossoms are discovered to have at their centre a rich purple or puce-coloured eye, which, by varying the white hue of the petals, adds much to their beauty.

Who has not remarked the frailty of flowers? Even so long ago as when the inspired writers wandered among the scenes of nature, collecting from her stores figures wherewith to impress and affect the human mind during all time;—even then “the flower that fadeth,” the “flower of the field,” was an emblem of all that was fleeting. Evanescent, however, as is the beauty of all flowers, there is a difference in the length of time during which they are beautiful; and some which are destined for a few hours only of sunshine, have been classed as “Ephemeral flowers.” Among these are the plants of the *cistus* genus.

Single flowers generally fade earlier than double ones; and this is the reason why a field nosegay perishes so much sooner than the

bouquet of cultivated flowers,—wild plants having usually single blossoms; and the full double flowers of our gardens having been rendered thus, in most cases, by the art of the cultivator.

No one who has remarked the flowers of the gum-cistus can have failed to observe their ephemeral nature. The very shrub which, in the sunny morning, bears such a quantity of elegant and fragrant blossoms, is by noontime left destitute of all but its leaves, and the small white buds which promise a gleam of beauty on a coming day; while the fair large petals, showered over the small plant which grows beneath the shelter of its branches, make the latter look like a little snow mound, or, strewn by the breezes more loosely upon the garden pathway, deck it as with numerous flowers.

“ Yet, sooth, those little starry specks,
That not in vain aspired
To be confounded with live growths,
Most dainty, most admired,
Were only blossoms dropped from twigs,
Of their own offspring tired.”

Notwithstanding the fugacious nature of its flowers, this shrub is, upon the whole, entitled to be regarded as a more permanent ornament to the garden, for after the falling of one day's blossoms, its abundant buds await only the dawn of another morning to expand; and thus they maintain a constant succession of beauty during the months of June and July. This shrub was introduced hither from Spain, where it grows wild in abundance, and it is found generally in the countries and islands of southern Europe.

From the gum-cistus, as well as from two other kinds (*Cistus lédon* and *Cistus créticus*), is derived the gum ladanum, or labdanum, which in Greece and some other lands is in great request as a perfume, and is very often used in fumigations in this country.

This resinous substance is secreted by the leaves and stems of the cistus, and was, on account of its fragrant property, much valued by the ancients, who called it ledon. They were accustomed to obtain it in considerable

quantities from the Isle of Cyprus, which was long famous for producing it.

A strange tale is told of the method by which the ladanum was formerly gathered. The leaves and branches of the cistus emit this gum in drops as clear as turpentine. In its native sunny regions this liquid is profuse upon the plant, though in our colder climate it is only in sufficient quantity to render the stems clammy to the touch. The goats which browse among the wild thyme and other plants of those rocky cliffs on which it often grows, attracted by its odour, pierce its branches with their teeth, and these incisions cause the resin to exude more freely. It is said that the drops which flowed down upon the beards of these animals, and concreted there, were scraped off for the purposes of commerce.

A more cleanly mode of obtaining this substance is now adopted, as a kind of rake, to which are attached several leathern thongs, is scraped over the plant during the hottest days of the season, at which time the liquid appears

upon it in greatest quantity. The drops are then collected and made up into cakes, which the Greeks too often adulterate with sand.

The gum-cistus (*Cistus ladaniferus*) grows in great profusion at the foot of Mount Ida, and upon the mountains in the vicinity of Canea. The ladanum exhales, while burning, an aromatic odour, and this drug is also valuable for its tonic properties.

The exudation of the resinous substance from the cistus must be regarded as an effort of the plant to throw off the superabundance of its secretion, and is not, like the honey-dew, a symptom of the unhealthy state of the vegetable. This latter substance is the gummy sweet fluid found upon the foliage of some plants, and is very hurtful to them, especially to the hops. It is generally considered to arise from an injury done to the root by the caterpillar of a common moth.

“A great consumption,” says a French traveller, “is made of ladanum in the East. It is a custom almost general, to knead little pieces

of it between the fingers, and to smell the rather agreeable odour which they diffuse. The women principally take great pleasure in using it in this manner. Besides its perfume, this substance is considered to avert contagion, and to possess several other medicinal properties." It is used throughout the islands of the Archipelago as a remedy for headach.

The purple cistus (*Cistus villósus*) is another flower of this family, often cultivated in the garden, and it possesses the advantage of both a vernal and autumnal season of bloom. Its first period of flowering is during May and June, and it generally expands again in September and October. Both the white and purple cistus are very common in the hedges of Italy, where their crumpled petals mingle with the white flower of the hawthorn or privet. The cistus is often called holly rose, but its usual name is derived from *cista*, because its seed is inclosed in a *cista* or capsule.

There are, besides these, some other species of garden cistus. They have all been introduced

from those mild climates of southern Europe to which our gardens are so much indebted. They will survive the winter in the open air, except when the frosts are more than usually severe.

The only wild kind of cistus is the rock-rose, which is by some writers called helianthemum, by others, cistus. It resembles the garden flower of the latter name in its shape, but the blossoms are either yellow, white, or red, and not much larger than a flower of the large strawberry or hautboy. The only wild kind of this plant which is at all frequent, is the common rock-rose (*Heliánthemum vulgáre*) which flourishes on dry gravelly pastures. It has yellow blossoms, and leaves growing opposite to each other of an oblong shape. The remaining native kinds are confined to a few spots of our island. The cultivated kinds are well known, with their soft cistus-like flowers of orange, red, or yellow, and their small leaves. Their bright colours originated their scientific name, which is taken from the two Greek words "sun" and "flower."

Rock-roses are often employed to grow among the stones of grottoes, or over rocks, as they require a small portion of soil for their sustenance.

These plants belong to the natural order Cistinæa, which produces no other plant of any note.

CHAPTER XXX.

WALLFLOWER—RUINED CASTLE—GARDEN WALLFLOWER
—WILD WALLFLOWER—NIGHT-SCENTED WALLFLOWER
—MOSCHATEL—MUSK-MALLOW—CRUCIFEROUS PLANTS
—STOCK—TABLE VEGETABLES—HONESTY—MADWORT
—CANDYTUFT—CARDAMINE—SCURVY-GRASS.

Not a pastoral song has a pleasanter tune
Than ye speak to my heart, little wildings of June,
Of old ruinous castles ye tell:
I thought it delightful your beauties to find,
When the magic of nature first breathed on my mind,
And your blossoms were part of the spell.

Campbell.

How delicious is the scent of the breeze, as it comes to us wafted from the numerous wall-flowers, which have aspired to the very summit of the old castle's ivy-covered walls, and are gleaming brightly to the sun, and looking upward, like Hope above a tomb! Then, as the wind floats them backwards and forwards,

giving a momentary lustre to some gloomy arch, they remind one of the passing smiles which can sometimes illumine even the brow of care, and serve but to awaken attention to the melancholy contrast. A few centuries since, and those now ruined battlements stood in all the pride of a strength which it might have seemed neither time nor storm should subdue. Crowned with their martial warriors, tall plumes and brilliant pennons received the rays now falling upon the wild flowers; and spirit-stirring echoes were awakened by the trumpet, where now are heard only the sound of aerial music, as it sweeps around the ruins. Again and again returns the "delicate-footed spring," and those blossoms are called by the lark and the cuckoo to awake from their winter sleep, and deck afresh the hoary tower, but never more shall the ruin arise to renewed vigour.

But though the yellow, scented, and well-known flower is always meant when we speak of the wallflower, a few others share with it the lofty station in which it flourishes so well.

There are the handsome and singularly formed blossoms of the snap-dragon (*Antirrhinum*), now of a colour deep as the crimsoned purple tide which flows in living veins,—now of a pale and soft rose-coloured hue, or, sometimes of a white tint, shaded with a faint blush of pink. From out the old crevices of the crumbling stone, creeps that small flower, called familiarly mother-of-thousands, but more correctly, the ivy-leaved toad-flax. Its long thread-like reddish stems are covered with a number of lobed leaves, the under surfaces of which are often flesh-coloured; while the small flower, shaped like that of the snap-dragon, is of a purplish lilac. Sometimes the wild mignonette, or dyer's-weed (*Reséda lutéola*), lifts its brimstone-coloured spike above the deep yellow of the low stonecrop, whose name well implies its uses; for it furnishes a common crop to the stony surface. Its acrid succulent leaves have procured for it also the name of wall-pepper; and so pungent are they, that they will blister the tongue of any one who tastes them.

On a few walls of England, though never in the northern portion of the island, may be found the red wild valerian (*Valeriana rubra*), called commonly pretty-betty, and frequent in gardens. Its old name was setewall; and Chaucer calls it thus, as does also the gentle-hearted and earnest poet of the Fairy Queen. Mercurie's moist-bloude, too, was one of its old appellations.

The pellitory of the wall is another common plant on old ruins and similar places, and received its name (*Parictaria*) from *paries*, a wall. Its stems are of a reddish colour, and it has small green flowers, tinged with purplish red. It has a singular power of attracting and condensing the moisture of the atmosphere, and is often, on a dry day, covered with little spangles like dew-drops.

This plant is very interesting to botanists, because of the singular manner in which the stamens shed the powdery dust which lies upon them. This powder is called pollen, and is very conspicuous on the stamens of large

flowers, as the white lily, where it often colours with yellow the faces of those who approach very near to inhale the fragrance of the blossoms. When the minute flowers of the peltitory of the wall are first formed, the threads or stamens all bend inwards. As soon as the pollen is quite ripe, and the sun shines upon it, the stamens fly back instantly, and a quantity of dust is discharged from them. The same effect is produced if they are touched ever so slightly with the point of a pin.

Then there is the little white-flowered whitlow grass (*Drába vérna*), which grows in small tufts of a few inches high, on many a stone or brick building, and almost escapes observation from its diminutive size; and there are ferns and mosses which cannot be individually described, but which lend their grace to hide decay. Sometimes a stray flower, like the pale yellow toad-flax, or the brighter yellow hawkweed, is sown on the wall by the birds of the air, and grows there for a season, though on an unkindly soil. Occasionally, even a tree, whose

seed was borne thither by these winged planters, sends out its roots, and spreads abroad its branches, and shoots forth its green leaves to the sun and dew.

“ And there it lives, a huge tree flourishing,
Where you would think a blade of grass would die.”

But the plant which peculiarly inhabits the soil of the mouldering tower or building, the “yellow wallflower stained with iron brown,” as Thomson calls it, is as common throughout our island as any wild flower, and every one knows it too well to need a description of its appearance. The *Cheiránthus chéiri*, with its shrubby stem and yellow blossoms, is one of the sweetest scented flowers of the early year. This is the same species as the common wallflower of the garden, but the additional nutriment gives its petals, when planted on the bed, a deeper stain of the iron brown, than they have when they grow untended by human hands, sown by birds, and watered only by the spring rains. It was regarded by the Troubadours as

the emblem of faithfulness in adversity, because it smiles upon the ruin. Its old name was that of yellow violet, or yellow stock gilliflower; and the Spaniards still call it *violette amarilla*. Bernard Barton has addressed some beautiful stanzas to a flower which is a general favourite for its delicious fragrance, as well as for the reasons which he assigns for his admiration; and which will be better told in his poetry than in the author's prose. After recounting the feeling with which his youthful eye marked the wallflower, the poet sings,

“ And now 't is sweeter to behold
Upon a bowering eve,
Thy wind-swept blossom, meekly bold,
The sun's last look receive.

I love thy beauty there to mark,
Thy lingering light to see,
When all is growing drear and dark
Except the west and thee.

For then, with brightness caught from heaven,
An emblem true thou art
Of love's enduring lustre given
To cheer a lonely heart.

Of love, whose deepest, tenderest worth,
Till tried, was all unknown ;
Which owes to sympathy its birth,
And ' seeketh not its own.'

But by its self-abandonment,
When cares and griefs appal,
Appears as if from heaven 't were sent
To compensate for all."

But leaving unquoted the greater part of a poem full of pleasant thoughts, we must turn to the garden wallflowers, though we ought to give them another name, as they grow on the beds of earth. We have several handsome kinds in the garden, especially the dark brown common species, and some of the double-flowered sorts ; and they are all sweetly and powerfully scented. The foreign ones have reached us from warmer regions. In Arabia, the wallflower is frequently the subject of poetic comparison, and is much admired. The word *cheiránthus* is derived from the Arabic word *kheyry*. This was the ancient name, however, of a genus of red flowers, and was not

given in former times to the flower which now owns it.

One species of this plant, the sad wallflower (*Cheiránthus tristis*), as it has been poetically called, has a sombre and dismal hue, of a dark liver-colour, and cannot boast of an ornamental appearance; but it compensates for its deficiency in lustre by the exquisitely delicate fragrance which it diffuses during night.

Night-scented blossoms are rarely beautiful in their tints, but this is of little importance, since they seem rather to belong to the hours of darkness, than to the day and sunlight. Their odour reaches the evening wanderer at a time when its aroma might not be expected. A nightly expanding blossom it was which suggested the beautiful thought of the Hindoo poet, "The moon looks on many night-flowers, the night-flower sees but one moon."

In our country, night-scented flowers are few, though in the East the moon seems to have as much power as the sun in extracting their perfumes. Several of our native plants, like

the lime-blossoms, scent the evening air, though until that period of the day, their odour is not perceptible. This is the case with one of our wild orchideous plants, the butterfly orchis (*Habenária bifolia*). It has large yellowish-coloured flowers, which are at all times fragrant, but during evening, much more so than at noon. The same may be said of the little moschatel, or gloryless (*Adóxa moschatéllina*), a small green flower, with three lobed leaves on a long leaf-stalk, which, when the dew begins to fall, emits its long concealed odours, and imbues the air with the scent of musk. The yellow ladies' bed straw has, during twilight, a scent like that of new honey, and the musk-mallow (*Málva moscháta*), which during the sunshine has but a faint musky smell, reserves the full power of its odours until that period

“ When the lamb bleating doth bid good-night
Until the closing day.”

This flower is generally described as yielding a slight scent of musk, and this only from its

leaves; but perhaps it has not been observed in the evening, when every part of it is so fragrant, that if gathered, it will fill a room with its odour. It is not common in Kent and some other counties, but in Essex it is very abundant. Plants, whose blossoms, like those of the wallflower, are shaped like a Maltese cross, are termed by botanists cruciform, and they constitute the natural order Cruciferae.

If the reader remember the form of the single wallflower, with its four petals, and its flower-cup of four leaves, he may know the order whenever he meets with it. There is, too, in cruciferous plants, a great similarity of properties. They are generally characterised by a pungent principle, which renders them valuable to the physician, and they all diffuse, when bruised, an odour of mustard. A large number of cruciform plants are eaten at our tables, and even those which, like the wallflower, are unpleasant to the palate, are yet wholesome. In the kitchen-garden we find the radish, the turnip, the horse-radish, and many plants of this

kind; and the large number of cresses, both wild and cultivated, which by their pungent principle render salads more wholesome, have cross-shaped flowers.

The wild mustards, of which there are too many kinds to be enumerated here, have yellow or white blossoms in this form. One of them, commonly known by the name of charlock (*Sinápis arvénsis*), gives the neglected field a very gay colour, and far over the landscape may be seen the patch of bright yellow, where only the green leaves of the corn would be welcomed by the landowner. Every one must have observed in May and June the corn-field, where—

“ O'er the young corn the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade.”

Many more cruciform plants may be mentioned. There are the different kinds of scurvy grass, with white flowers: one of these, the English scurvy grass (*Cochleária ánglica*), grows on rocks and muddy shores, and is very common

by the sea-side, as well as by salt rivers. It may be regarded as a beneficent arrangement of Providence, that a plant so efficacious in curing complaints often engendered by a long voyage, should be one of the first to greet the sailor when he touches the land. The town of Barmouth in Wales, is said to have owed its repute as a bathing-place to the quantity of this plant which grows in its neighbourhood, and which is taken by invalids.

We have besides a number of cruciferous plants which, with their white or yellow flowers, are well known, and often found intruding on the forbidden ground of the garden. There is the shepherd's-purse, with its little heart-shaped pouches, thickly set down its stem; and the land-cress, and the treacle-mustard, or Jack-in-the-hedge, as it is often called (*Erysimum alliaria*), with small white flowers and large leaves, a plant which may be easily known by its powerful odour of garlic; and there is a taller plant, with small yellow flowers, most frequent in cultivated fields, with its long stem

often three feet high, branched at the summit only, and looking like a tall chandelier with many branches. This plant is called the gold of pleasure (*Camelina sativa*).

One of the prettiest flowers of spring woods and meadows, the ladies'-smock (*Cardamine pratensis*), often called by the prettier name of cuckoo-flower, belongs to this order. It rises more than a foot high, and has delicately tinged lilac petals. Its old English name, by which Shakspeare and our earlier writers call it, was given it because linen was formerly laid out in meadows to dry, and the appearance of a land covered with this flower was fancied to resemble that of one covered with linen.

Shakspeare's description of it, "the ladies' smock all silver white," is true to nature. Old Gerarde says of it, "it flowres when the cuck-owe doth begin to sing her pleasant notes without stammering." It is often eaten as cress, and was formerly called bitter-cress.

The dyer's-wood (*Isatis*) is another plant of this order, sometimes found wild, and frequently

cultivated for its blue dye. It has arrow-shaped leaves and yellow flowers, and is interesting because our forefathers employed it to stain their bodies, and acquired by its means the name of Britons, from the word *Britho*, to paint.

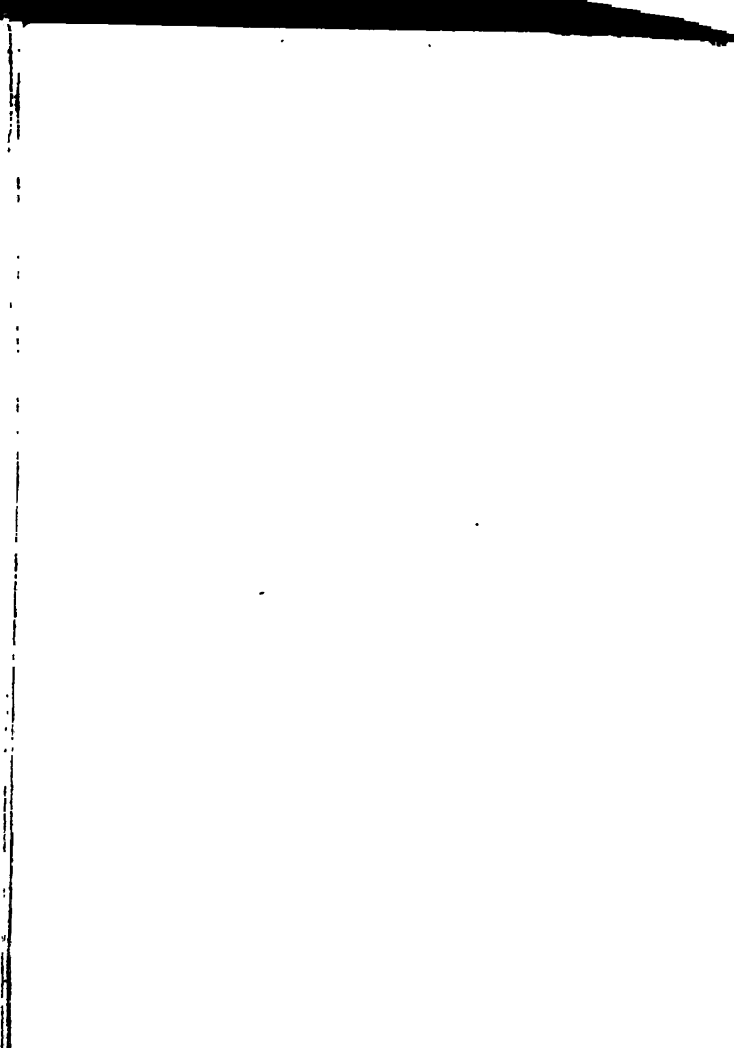
Among the chief ornaments with which the cruciferous family supply our gardens, is the stock: this flower, with its dark purple, red, or white blossoms, is too fragrant and too beautiful not to be generally cultivated. As we have two species of wild stock (*Mathiöla*), it is thought by some botanists to have been raised from the little sea-side flower, but it is most probably derived from the finer kinds, which grow wild in the south of Europe. It was formerly called *dame's-violet*, perhaps, because the dames or ladies, of olden times, took pleasure in rearing it. The cross-shaped form must of course be looked for in the single flowers, as cultivation renders the blossoms like dark-coloured roses. Then we have the rockets (*Hesperis*), some of them fragrant in the evening; the purple honesty, with its silvery pellicles, whose trans-

parent nature have procured for it its familiar name, while the crescent-shaped seeds have caused it also to be called moonwort, and their soft texture made the old name of satin flower very suitable. The pretty candytufts, one of which, the white kind (*Iberis semperflórens*), remains in blossom all the year. The purple species was the first known to us, and as it was found wild in Candia, it has given the name to all the genus. The alyssums are also pretty summer flowers, especially the common yellow sort (*Alyssum saxátile*); the ancient Greeks thought that this plant, if taken internally, allayed anger.

THE END.

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